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M E M O I R S

OF THE

LIFE AND WRITINGS

OF THE

ABATE METASTASIO.

IN WHICH ARE INCORPORATED,

TRANSLATIONS

OF HIS

PRINCIPAL LETTERS.

By CHARLES BURNEY, MUs. D. F. R. S.

Omniaque ejus non solum facta, sed etiam dicta meminisset.

CIC. SOMN. SCIPI.

IN THREE VOLUMES.

VOL. II.

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M E M O I R S

OF THE

LIFE AND WRITINGS

OF THE ABATE

PIETRO METASTASIO.

SECTION I.

METASTASIO having finished his opera of *Il Re Pastore* in April 1751, writes to his friend Sig. Argenvilliers at Rome, with exultation. "I have at length escaped from the hands of those babblers the Muses. I have teased and tormented them so much, that they have finished their web much sooner than they would have done, if they had been left to their own direction. I am now at the service of my dear friends, particularly Sig. d'Argenvilliers, to whose pious

VOL. II. R prayers,

prayers, I believe I owe, in a great measure, my happy return from Parnassus.

LETTER I.

T OSIG. D'ARGENVILLIERS.

STILL fatigued and covered with dust and sweat, after my unexpected and hasty voyage, I instantly flew to your letters, a restoratives. I have greedily re-perused them, and frequently blushed at the ungrateful return for your obliging and affectionate zeal, which I have made by a silence of so many weeks. But you know that I am innocent of this fault, and merit your pity more than your displeasure. I can assure you, with great truth, that I have such pleasure in my literary intercourse with you, that if I were deprived of it by my own fault, my crime would be my punishment.

Now, that you may not think, like the rest of the world, that poets are bad fathers of families, it will be necessary for me to give you some account of my æconomical cares.

(Here he gives a minute detail of his money concerns, and balances accounts to the date of his letter. After which he adds)

Thus

Thus all is settled, except the sum of my obligations, which far exceeds my small capital, and means of repaying the assiduous and affectionate care which you constantly take of my affairs. And I should already have overdrawn my credit, if a good heart, like yours, did not regard as ready money, the gratitude, however ineffectual, of a poor debtor.

My new opera is already in the hands of my most august Patroness, to whom both myself and all my productions properly belong. This drama is to be performed in music, by gentlemen and ladies, but not till the return of the court from Hungary. In the mean time, it would be an enormous indecorum, if I were to publish it. So that there are both physical and moral causes against its appearing in Giannini's Edition next June. However, I so much respect his request, backed by your wish, that when I can safely and honourably comply with it, I shall be happy in obliging him.

L E T T E R II.

TO THE SAME.

You have found the way to make me your debtor, even in the number of letters. I have many of yours in hand which have arrived since my last, and which I must answer by this one, contrary to the propensity I have to be prolix with you. My *Re Pastore* appeared on the stage last Wednesday, and was repeated on Saturday, by the unanimous suffrage of the whole audience; this very much surpassed my expectations, and added, if possible, to my experience. In truth, the lady performers charmed every one, both by their figure and singing, as well as by their manner of acting, and entering into their several characters. Our august sovereigns were extremely delighted with them, and never cease praising them. All the portion of this incense which comes to my share, is insufficient to defend me from a return of the defluxion which I caught in Moravia, and which I had not quite subdued when I was recalled. The frequent

frequent attendance at court, two or three miles from the city ; the length of time I was obliged to remain in the empty and extreme cold theatre, during the rehearsal; the impertinence of the season, and of my ridiculous machine, have reduced me to so much worse a state than I was in before, that if I was not afraid of bringing all the saints on my back, I should certainly be tempted to leave the mass of the day among unpaid debts (a). Pity me therefore ; or rather, be thankful to my catarrh, if I do not pester you as much as I wish.—Adieu, my incomparable friend. If I could write more, I should say a thousand affectionate things. I give you full permission to figure to yourself, the most expressive that you can think of ; and am certain, that they will not equal the affection, gratitude, or esteem, with which I am, &c.

Vienna, November 1, 1751.

In another letter to this correspondent, dated December 6th 1751, he says, “ I have got *Il Re Pastore* off my hands, but I shall not long

(a) Alluding to the festival of *All Saints*, or the first of November, the day on which he was writing.

be suffered to remain idle. My Imperial Mistress, after the repeated clemency with which she has approved my labours, threatens me with a new command ; and I already feel it vibrate in my ears ; so that my occupations are like the fruits in the garden of Armida.

E mentre spunta l'un, l'altro mature (b).

This new production is the subject of a letter to his Piemontese friend, Sig. Filipponi, who had complained of his neglect during the time he was writing it.

L E T T E R III.

TO SIG. FILIPPONI.

You must not ascribe to the poor Muses my reluctance to writing letters. I have not, like many others, the happy power of speaking eloquently upon nothing ; so that when matter is wanting, I am silent. Who can have patience to write every post about rain, or fine weather ? or in the manner of Pindar, speak of water, gold, and the beautiful cows of Gerone, as *à propos* to the

(b) While one matures, the other buds and blows.

Olympic

Olympic games? Some of my Laconism, however, may proceed from native laziness, but, at present, the time for new vices or new virtues is past; so that such as I am, my friends must bear with me.

I approve of the distribution of my prints; and if you want any more, you shall have them upon the slightest hint you can give me.

This new edition of my works at Turin, may be superior to others, if not printed in the usual small characters, merely for a paltry saving of paper. If you could send me a specimen in a letter, I would frankly give you my sentiments on the subject.

The title of my new opera is, *Il Re Pastore*. The chief incident is the restitution of the kingdom of Sidon to the lawful heir; a prince with such an hypochondriac name, that he would have disgraced the title page of my piece: who would have been able to bear an opera intitled *l'Abdolonimo*? I have contrived to name him as seldom as possible, as among all my faults, my labours had hitherto avoided this defect.

It will be represented in music by ladies and gentlemen, but not before December; till when, it cannot be published without a
B 4
crime.

crime. I offer my usual incense to the amiable priestess, and am constantly yours.

Vienna, June 10, 1751.

LETTER IV.

TO THE SAME.

I SHALL now answer your charming letter from the spacious regions of imagination; in order to do which, I waited two or three weeks in the vain expectation of receiving specimens of this new edition of my works, which you had promised me; but as yet, none are arrived. I have seen the two first volumes of that printed at Piacenza, which in my opinion, is contemptible; hence it will certainly do no injury to yours.

In an edition in 12mo. by Bettinelli, I have seen a cantata, and a canzonet, given undeservedly to me; I inclose a memorandum of it, that the Turenese editor may not enrich me, against my will, with the spoils of another.

When my *Re Pastore* has done its duty at this court, I shall take care to send it to do homage to you; but you must tell me how.

Here

Here are six more little *Metaftafios*, which I confide to your direction, left they ſhould take evil courſes.

My complaints are enemies to the oriental ſtyle, ſo adieu. Remember my reſpects to the Count and Counteſs della Rocca; reverence the prieſteſs; receive the ſalutations of all the *Canale* family. Love me, and believe me, &c.

Vienna, Auguſt 19, 1751:

We are now arrived at the correſpondence of our great lyric bard, in 1752; during which his letters to his friend Sig. d'Argenvilliers, are the moſt numerous. But thoſe being chiefly on buſineſs, as before obſerved, we ſhall not tranſlate them entire, but extract ſuch paſſages only, as bear our author's peculiar ſtamp of wit, friendſhip, or urbanity.

In a ſhort letter, dated January 3d, 1752, we have the following concluſion: "It is ſo late, that I have ſcarce time to acknowledge the receipt of your letter; think then of the impoſſibility of answering all your good wiſhes, and thoſe affectionate expreſſions of partiality, with which you have loaded me. Answer them yourſelf, who know how much I owe you; and who being in poſſeſſion

possession of my heart, can examine its most secret recesses. ”

“ The Muses (says he, in the subsequent letter to Sig. d’Argenvilliers) are become very shy and backward to me ; requiring to be courted much more than I wish. I have been very indifferent about these ladies favours for some time ; but, at present, now they defraud me of the pleasure of discoursing with you, they are become my aversion. But I beg of you not to speak of it ; for if the D—l should contrive to let them know my sentiments, they would treat me worse than ever. ”

In another letter he says : “ Not being able to satisfy my impatience to embrace and converse with you in person, I send you my picture, with a charge to preserve in you that good disposition towards friendship and partiality, which you have always manifested for me. The painter has a little injured my beauty, by making my face two palms long, and plumping me up without mercy. They say, however, that it is like.”

“ Receive the visit kindly ; love the original, and believe me on all occasions, yours.”

Having this year taken fright at a few days of bad weather, soon after his arrival

in Moravia, and suddenly returned to Vienna, he says: "Here I am again in the city, with remorse for the injustice which my cowardice has done to the constancy of smiling autumn, who now more than fulfils every hope, by being uncommonly serene. It is in vain to repine now; but another year, I shall not retreat with such precipitation, in order to imprison myself within the walls of a city."

About this time, his friend d'Argenvilliers having recommended to the kind offices of Metastasio, a young Roman of the name of *Pezzi*, we shall extract from the poet's letters, such passages as concern this recommendation.

"I have at length found Sig. *Pezzi*. I have been with him, and he with me, three times. He is a fine young man, of noble and excellent manners, and who promises to do honour to the friend who recommended him. He has no thoughts of the army; but speaks of pursuing a different road, and I shall do every thing in my power to second his views. I hope he has no doubt of my zeal, as there is nothing which I would not do, or which I ought not to do, on your account. All will depend on my power corresponding with

with my wishes. At present, I shall endeavour to discover to him the perils of the country in which he now dwells, and to inform myself of his habits." Four or five months after, he says :

" Sig. *Pezzi* manifested a laudable dislike to being idle, and very little desire for being a soldier. In order therefore to initiate him in politics, according to his wish, I contrived that he should be advantageously known to our Count Ullfelt, and other principal persons in administration, who spoke of him to my august Patronets ; and it was settled, that when an opportunity offered, he should be sent with some ambassador, or envoy, to one of the foreign courts of Europe, where, by diligence and practice, he might render himself qualified for some station in the *Corps diplomatique*.

" While things were in this situation, he came unexpectedly to take leave of me, previous to his departure for Berlin, whither he said he was obliged to go, for some time, on family affairs. I furnished him with a letter, which I wrote to a friend of mine, of some credit in that court ; but from that time to this, I have been wholly in the dark, concerning the effects of my letter, his adventures, or his

his existence. When he returns, as he promised to do, I shall resume my duty in doing every thing in my power for your sake, to facilitate the road which he means to pursue. If he should have occasion for money, I will advance him whatever sum you please, on the slightest notice. But I cannot, with equal readiness, promise to conduct him by a sure road to preferment. Accustomed myself to follow the beaten track, I am wholly ignorant of all private and by roads; and my inexperience would do him more harm than good. But whenever he returns from Prussia, he will find pilots here for some voyage or other. Do not, my dear friend, fancy me a Don Quixote, For the management of businesses of this nature, I want inclination as well as practice."

Soon after, he says to his friend: "I regard dissimulation among intimate friends, as a rascally vice. Therefore, you will, I hope, forgive my sincerity. I by no means understand the conduct of our Sig. *Pezzi*. He is a young man of a fine aspect, of polished manners, and, apparently, possessed of a great share of prudence and discernment. Yet I have been hitherto utterly unable to penetrate his thoughts; though he constant-

ly

ly visits me once a month. Every time I see him, he seems a different man; and always approaching me with different views from those in which, at his own request, I had been trying to serve him before. It is difficult to advise a man who is always changing his pursuits, and who gives no notice of it, unless hard pressed. I beg that you will not mention this to his brother. But it was necessary for you to know it, that in case he should return empty handed, you may not be ignorant that the person you have recommended, has conspired with the extreme narrowness of my powers of serving him, to delude the great and serious desire which I have to serve him for your sake."

In another letter dated April 1753, he says: "Sig. *Pezzi* having wished to accompany some Imperial minister to a foreign court, in order to acquire abilities sufficient to entitle him to an employment in the *Corps diplomatique*; I have been so fortunate as to prevail on *Count Colleredo*, our Envoy to the English court, to take him into his service, with a small salary, and the consent and approbation of their Imperial majesties. I hope the voyage will turn out profitable: particularly, as he tells me, that
his

his family has some concerns in that country, and that his presence will not be useless there."

Though nothing more occurs in our poet's letters to Sig. d'Argenvilliers concerning his *protegé*, Sig. *Pezzi*, we shall perhaps return to this correspondence again for some interesting passages on other subjects. At present, we shall resume his intercourse with Farinelli, to whom the following letter was written in February, 1752.

LETTER V.

TO THE CAVALIER FARINELLI.

In spite of the obstinate and insufferable impertinence of my nervous complaints, and the employment allotted to me by my Imperial Patroness, I cannot postpone acknowledging the receipt of my dear Gemello's most welcome letter of the 28th of January. For my most heinous sins, the dramatic ladies in *Il Re Pastore*, and the music, have so much pleased her Majesty the Empress, that she has commanded me to write another drama to be performed next May, made of the same metal. In the present state of my
poor

poor head, from the constant tension of my nerves, it is a terrible task to be obliged to converse with these harlots the Muses ; but my labours are rendered infinitely more intolerable, by the manner in which I am manacled. Greek and Roman subjects are excluded from my jurisdiction, because these nymphs are not to exhibit their chaste limbs ; so that I must have recourse to Oriental history, in order not to shew the nakedness of the land, that the robes and ornaments of those nations may entirely envelope the actresses who are to represent the characters of men. The contrast of vice and virtue is impracticable in these dramas, because no one of the troop will act an odious part. Nor can I avail myself of more than five personages, for the most convincing reason assigned by the governor of a castle ; who would not crowd the presence of his superiors. The time of representation, the changes of scene, the airs, and almost the number of verses are limited : now pray tell me, if all these embarrassments would not make a patient man mad ? Then imagine to yourself their effects on me, the high priest of all the complaints incident to this miserable valley of tears. I have no other comfort
for

for my support, than the constant clemency of my most benign Sovereign, confirmed every day by new testimonies. The last, on account of the representation of *Il Re Pastore*, was that of a magnificent gold candlestick, with an extinguisher and snuffers of the same metal, of a considerable weight, and of excellent workmanship; and accompanied with an obliging command *to take care of my sight*. Now I beg you will learn to respect my little *peepers*, which are so greatly patronized.

I am glad to find that Monfig. *Torres*, answers my description. Embrace him, I beg you, in my name. I love him, because he adored you: now what will he do, after having enjoyed your company in a more ample manner?

With respect to my Neapolitan interests, you think exactly as I do. Neither the decorum of your court, my own pride, nor the miserable and contemptible hopes which are given us, can longer deceive any one possessed of the least reflection: It is difficult to find a similar example of inhumanity, injustice, and avidity, for the possessions of others. Oh, my dear *Gemello*, how few *Gemelli* are there in the world! I thank

you for the idea of trying other strings ; and trust to the experience of the archconful of harmony. The Colomba Mattei will ferve you well. I who am never fatisfied, believe that if this performer, who has a pleasing figure, and good voice, was a little taller, and had a little more power of voice, ſhe would be an admirable firſt woman. But during the preſent ſcarcity, we muſt not be ſo difficult.

Oh, what fine things has Count *Verner* ſaid of you, on his return from Spain ! I feed on theſe relations, and wiſh them to be eternal. Love me, my dear Twin, and believe that I ceaſe writing, for want of head, and want of time : but I never ſhall ceaſe, as long as I live, from being yours.

Vienna, February 18th, 1752.

LETTER XI.

TO THE SAME.

YOUR laſt moſt dear letter of the 16th of June, has been received four days, and yet I am not recovered from the ſurpriſe and confuſion in which the unexpected royal favour

favour of your truly admirable Sovereign has plunged me. Good God! can clemency, generosity, and greatness of soul, go farther? To think, speak, and act in this manner, are qualities assigned by Providence solely to her to employ. Her supreme interposition in support of reason, and justice, when oppressed, are efforts worthy of Monarchs; to expend their treasures in repairing losses which they themselves have not occasioned, is the attribute of royalty; but to descend to minute enquiries, and reflections on the hardships of a poor mortal like me, surrounded as she is, by the cares which belong to so elevated a station, is a circumstance which surpasses humanity, and not only merits gratitude and reverence, but adoration. The few royal words which you have communicated, form the grand characteristic of this Sovereign. She has done me the justice to believe me to be a man who thinks more of his honour than profit, and has designed to set limits to the torrent of her beneficence, in order to screen me from envy and malignity. Angels in heaven, I believe, think in this manner. I am more sensible of the honour which this does my character, than if I had been ap-

pointed vice-roy of Mexico, or presented with a Cardinal's hat. These may seem poetical hyperboles; but you know me sufficiently to be certain, that they are positive truths; and now your heroic friendship has procured me these great honours and advantages, you must complete the work, and communicate my humble, grateful, and reverential acknowledgments. Throw me at the foot of the throne; assert, that if the shower of royal munificence is fallen on an ordinary soil, it has at least been bestowed on one that is not ungrateful. Say all that I ought to say, but which I find unspeakable, even with the assistance of all the Muses. Implore the continuance of such sublime patronage; and I, in the mean time, instead of returning thanks, will offer up my supplications to Heaven, that a soul so great and elevated, may be long suffered to continue among mortals, for the ornament of all thrones, the felicity of the whole earth, and for an example to all Monarchs (c).

I have

(c) To what these effusions allude, does not clearly appear, in the course of this, or any subsequent letter; but they well merit preserving, as models of heroic and poetical gratitude, flowing from the warm heart of a man of genius,

I have seen, for a short time, Count Estherhafi, after his return from Madrid, and have found him full of you. He regards you as a hero, and has desired me to tell you so; which will oblige me likewise to love you more than ever. At this last assertion, I cannot help laughing; but I own, that to hear you thus praised, affords me the same pleasure, as if it was myself: so much does our old, true, and reciprocal friendship, seem to have united us together, and consolidated our interests. God preserve you, our dear Gemello, and inspire others to think as you do.

Last Sunday my Opera of L'EROE CINESE, was represented for the last time, with incredible applause of the ladies and gentlemen performers. I am worn out. The whole weight of the business fell on my shoulders. I came home with a violent cough, which still continues; but as soon as it abates, I shall ask permission of my most august patroness, to fly into the country, to rest. If I should there obtain a moment's peace, you will be my only thought. And who can possibly deserve it so much as genius, served and flattered by a sovereign Princess, sensible of his superior talents.

my dear Gemello? I am obliged to you for the description of the magnificent royal festival, which you invented and directed, and am impatient to see it more amply described in the Gazette. In the mean time, I do its office every where, to the admiration of all hearers.

I am not certain whether it was last April or May, that I sent a letter to my agent at Naples, informing him of circumstances for a minister who required them. I am sorry the requisition was complied with; but it shall be the last time.

I ought to speak of the road which you have attempted to Rome; but who can speak to you of every thing? Oh what a dear Gemello you are! But at least, take my part with the Marquis *Ensenada*, and recommend me to his protection. Adieu. The Countess of Althan salutes you, and is as much surpris'd as myself, at the favours I receive. I really can write no more. Continue to love me, and believe me yours, as long as life remains.

Vienna, July 8th, 1752.

L E T-

L E T T E R XII.

TO THE SAME.

I SET out this moment for Moravia, in order to join the most worthy Countess of Althan, and the General her son, who have been there some days. I go flattered with hopes of being relieved, if not liberated, from the cruel torments I suffer, amidst the pertinacious persecutions of my hypochondriac complaints, violently increased by the hurry in which I have lately been engaged. It is impossible for me to explain to you, my dear Gemello, the miserable state in which I have been for these seven years past. The worst of it is, that I see no likelihood of accustoming myself to these sufferings, as frequently happens to others. And I perceive, that you are not better treated by your stomach, than I am by my nerves. Oh poor humanity! But good God! Why are not these delights bestowed on a number of blockheads and rascals, who enjoy perfect health? But the great Regulator of all things

has reasons which we are not allowed to penetrate. We have therefore nothing to hope, but from patience, and resignation.

You think, perhaps, that I am now quite recovered from the surprise and confusion into which I was thrown by your most beneficent and magnanimous sovereign? But you are mistaken. I never shall recover as long as I live. These traits of royalty have been so little in fashion for some ages, that it is impossible not to admire and venerate them. I entreat you again, my dear friend, to bear testimony, whenever you have an opportunity, of my most humble, grateful, and submissive sentiments.

Adieu, dear Gemello. I have spoken to count Esterhazy: he calls you by no other name than the Hero. The affection which you contrive to acquire from all ranks in a situation so enviable, encreases my tenderness for you so much, that I know not how I should contain myself if I were near you. Pray to God for my poor head, if you would have it think of you. Love me, and remain thus amiable to the whole earth.

Vienna, August 5, 1752.

L E T.

L E T T E R XIII.

TO THE SAME.

HERE I am, just returned from Moravia, after a long and tumultuous excursion, which, on account of my health, I have been allowed by the maternal clemency of my august mistress, to extend to full ten weeks. The first person to whom I eagerly run after my arrival, is my dearest Gemello, whom I tenderly embrace in that kind of way which so enormous a distance will allow. Among the most sensible pleasures which I found in this city at my return, was the meeting with our dear Count Esterhasi, who almost before he saluted me, which he always does, began to speak of you: still calling you nothing but the *Hero*. He says that you are the object of all good people's affection; that your heart corresponds with your fortune; and has recounted a great number of your admirable, generous, and gracious actions. Among others, the manner in which you treated an Indian candidate, who offered you an

an immense sum if you would procure him a government; and he takes such delight in these narrations, and the sound of your praise is so seducing to me, that if count Esterhasi was not obliged to go elsewhere, I believe he would be still talking of you, and I should remain a constant listener. I love to hear these things for my own sake, as well as yours. I am not a little vain in having discovered your character, long before fortune had furnished occasion for the display of all your distinct qualities. God preserve you, for the delight of such an illustrious court, for the honour of Italy, and for the tender friendship of your most faithful Gemello. You were always in my heart during this excursion into the country. My dear Farinelli accompanied me into the woods, over the mountains, through the valley, and bore a part, not only in my diversions, but cruel hypochondriac persecutions. I proposed, and several times attempted, to write something or other for you in order to send it away before my return. But in a body tormented as mine has been, and now is, the soul is too ill lodged to be able to perform its due functions; and poetical operations, as well as amorous, are so
averse

averse to violence, that they always disgrace the rash mortals who attempt putting it in practice. Think what a desperate situation I must be in, assailed by all my old complaints; incapable of daring to compose the usual little compliments in verse, with which the arch-dukes and dutchesses are accustomed to felicitate their august parents on their name days; and instead of a new opera, that was wanted for ladies and gentlemen to perform, at the next carnival, I have been obliged to propose *Olimpiade*, in case the Muses should turn their backs upon me, after so many years of wedlock! But I would not have you think, that, with all these plagues and impediments, I have lost sight of your request. I shall again attempt the ford, and not desist till I am able to pass it. I have now a crowd of friends about me, who are talking to me all the time I am writing; so that I know not what escapes from my pen. But my comfort is, that we understand each other, and should not mistake the meaning of our hearts, if we spoke Arabic or Chinese.

I am obliged to write you a letter in favour of a certain *Mr. Hufcher*, who is going to Madrid in order to serve in the Spanish cavalry.

cavalry. Though it frequently happens that these offices are forced upon us, and we plague our friends with letters of mere form, this is not of that kind. This person is really of extreme good morals, of great merit, and well worthy of your patronage: so that I not only solicit for him myself, but the general count d'Althan, a perfect judge of his profession, and your great admirer, recommends him to your notice.

Oh how impressed I am with the luminous grandeur of the Manzanare divinity! Why am not I a Homer! Happy you, who have ocular testimony of such sublime virtue!

But it is time to conclude. And yet the countess d'Althan would kill me, if she thought I had not obeyed her orders, in saying at housand kind things in her name: so that, to save my life, I must beg of you to give me a little nod in your answer, that may serve for my justification. Now remember, that as one of two twins must suffer, and it is my turn, I shall have the generosity to bear it with patience, in hopes that you at least may enjoy that tranquil health which I have fought in vain these seven years. Love me, however, in spite of my impertinent and
teazing

teazing complaints, and believe me yours, in whatever state I may be allowed to exist.

Vienna, October 20, 1752.

LETTER XIV.

TO THE SAME.

You will receive by the hands of *D. Antonio de Alzor*, together with this letter, *Semiramide riconosciuta*, arranged for the use of your theatre royal. This trade of a cobbler, I only exercise for my incomparable Gemello. However, I am obliged to you for having forced it upon me : as this opera, with which I never was quite satisfied, is now become my favourite. It has gained this conquest against the grain, which you know was no easy matter ; but it has now acquired a kind of constant fire, which, being compressed, ought to become more intense. In short, I am pleased with it : which very seldom has happened to any of my own productions. Before I forget it, let me tell you, that if you wish to cut out any
one

one of the songs, that of Mirteo, in the third act, beginning *In braccio a mille furie*, might be omitted without much loss (*d*).

I shall now rest myself for two or three days, and then take *Adriano* in hand, of which I have not the least idea; and I would not read it before, lest my head should be crouded with a confusion of images hostile to each other. I shall expend more time in the business than I ought, as I have had no amanuensis capable of assisting me, since *Migliavacca* entered into the service of the court of Dresden. Hence, I am obliged to write and transcribe all with my own hand: being hardly able to depend on that of a mere copyist for the last transcript which I send. Add to this all my numberless complaints, and then accuse me of delay or negligence, if you have the heart. If ever you have any idea of machinery for the Epilogue, let me know it in time, and the day

(*d*) In the Paris Edit. of Metastasio's Works, 1755, the several dramas that are printed twice over, were altered to oblige Farinelli, for the royal theatre at Madrid. To the title of each of these, Calfabigi added the words, *Corretto dall' Autore*. Since these alterations have been published, they have been generally adopted by composers, in new setting these dramas.

for

for which it is designed, that I may send you the words.

When I have finished *Adriano*, I shall again think of the *Festarella*, or little entertainment which you wish. I say that I shall *again* think of it; as in the midst of all my sufferings I have always had it in mind, though no idea occurred which pleased me. These little baubles are more difficult, with respect to invention, than great. If you wish to have this assertion proved, pray recollect that among the old operas, though there are a few that are sufferable, yet in the whole number of ancient theatrical pieces, there is not one *Serenata*, *Entertainment*, or *Oratorio*, that is tolerable. I have an odd thought ill digested, of a possibility of writing two parts that would suit the *Mingotti* and the *Castelli*. But at present I drive it from my thoughts, as I should a temptation, lest it should confound my ideas. Stript as *Adriano* will be, I shall apply to myself in accommodating it: *in quantum Metastasiana fragilitas patitur*.

By comparing your sufferings with mine, you afford me no kind of comfort; I know that the resemblance is sympathetic; but with regard to health, I wish our circum-

stances to be as dissimular as possible. My patience is not sufficient to bear *your* sufferings as well as my own. Therefore get well as fast as you can, as I am unable to turn your illness to any account. But, good God! while there are so many idle people who can come into the world merely to manure the earth, and to whom the occupation of a little bad health would be an interesting amusement; why are so many honest men to be tormented by it, who have employments that are useful to society? But we must not pry into the arcana of Providence.

Your *Didone*, yours as my twin, and yours as being so advantageously transformed by you, has had as great success at Vienna as at Madrid. It has been much talked of, and is still in every one's mouth; imagine then, whether on these occasions, your name is forgotten. In *Semiramide* you will have an opportunity of displaying to the world your magnificent ideas, worthy of the sovereigns who know your worth.

Do you adore our royal patroness, who are happily placed so near her, as I do on the banks of the Danube, and as she ought to be adored by all living creatures. Tell
I
her

her that I am more proud of her approbation than of that of the age we live in, or of all the ages to come. You will not allow me to ascribe all this shower of favours to your influence; let me, however, owe its continuance to your benignant prosperity, and take all possible care, that my want of sufficient merit to deserve it, does not transpire. I know how little a thing I am, and dread the consequence of my royal protectors knowing as much.

I entreat you to say for me, to the most respected and worthy count Migazzi, all that esteem, love, and reverence, kneaded together, can suggest. The countess d'Althan has already read the chapter concerning him, and is never fatiated with admiring your incomparable heart, who thus remember your valuable friends, even amidst the tumultuous favours of fortune.

This letter is an answer to two of yours which arrived at eight days distance from each other, one from the chancellor of our court, and the other from Messrs. Schmitmer. I did not immediately answer the first, because I wished to accompany my answer with *Semiramide*, which I shall consign to the care of Sig. Azlor, in a few minutes.

And now adieu. If you wish my health, take care of your own: and believe that there is no living creature who loves you more than I do.

Vienna, December 16, 1752.

We shall now return to our Poet's correspondence with his friend Sig. Filipponi at Turin, to whom only two letters of the year 1752, have been preserved.

LETTER XV.

TO SIG. FILIPPONI.

I SENT you long ago, by means of our friend count Canale, my *Eroe Cinese*, which you have doubtless read and examined. You must have observed, that to avoid the simplicity of *Il Re Pastore*, it was necessary to have recourse to more complication and ornament; whether these spring from probability, whether they sufficiently keep the mind of the spectators in suspense till the catastrophe, and whether the unities are preserved inviolate, notwithstanding the continual change of fortune, belongs to such as

you

3.

you to determine. Here the piece has produced all the effect I had promised myself; but performed by four beautiful ladies, what opera would not be praised up to the skies.

I am glad to hear again of this Sig. Rabj, and wish him good luck with his edition; but you have not told me what size and letter he has chosen. This silence makes me fear that the size will be *duodecimo*, and the letter of the minute and microscopic sect, invented by modern booksellers for the benefit of opticians. But enough of this: I shall suspend my invective, till the promised specimen arrives.

My respects to the amiable priests; let me hear from you and her, take care of your health, and believe me, &c.

Vienna, June 5, 1752.

L E T T E R XVI.

TO THE SAME.

OUR friendship is at the proof, for negligence on both sides. I have pardoned your rheumatism, and now you have to pardon the date of this letter. It tells you I am in Moravia, and I add, that I have been there

six weeks in the hands of tyrants, who allow me no other liberty than to grow fat, and divert myself. What misery! Even this answer is contraband, under heavy penalties: but there is no risk to which I would not expose myself for your sake. Curse on such haste! said the Tortoise tumbling down the hill which he had been twenty years climbing. You think perhaps, that I allude to Sig. Rabj—Oh what a mistake! Heaven keep me from imitating my executioners.

So the pious priests has made a Nun? Oh what a blessing! All breathes devotion around you. I recommend myself to the prayers of your whole family; and, not longer to prophane them, I embrace you and conclude.

Train, Sep. 16, 1752.

Several of Metastasio's letters to anonymous correspondents are inserted in the collection, to some of which there are no dates; but the following, by internal marks, seem to have been written about 1752 or 53.

LET-

L E T T E R XVII.

TO A GENTLEMAN OF MODENA.

It is extremely difficult to imagine greater politeness or generosity, than that of doing any one a favour, and then, in the most grateful manner possible, thanking the person on whom it is conferred, for having received it. This is exactly the case with you, Sir, who, after having favoured me with your company, and not only tolerated but courted my importunity, treat me, in your most obliging letter of the 20th inst. as if the debt of gratitude were not mine, but, on the contrary, wholly yours. If, after your departure, you had heard my opinions in all conversation, but particularly with the most worthy countess ——— concerning your politeness, complaisance, and all the productions of your rare and happy genius, which we have had the good fortune to admire; it might have convinced you, in spite of your extraordinary modesty, that the obligations are certainly all on our side, in every particular. If, however, you should still

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have

have your doubts, we beg of you to return, and dispute the point with us in person ; and we shall then avail ourselves of your goodness in furnishing new claims, to oblige you to accept of the best testimonies we can give of our admiration and gratitude. In the mean time, receive this letter with the united compliments of the lady mentioned above, in testimony of the regard of, &c.

L E T T E R XVIII.

TO THE SAME.

I PERCEIVE it is your benignant intention, Sir, that I should terminate the year with such satisfaction and pleasure, as I could not flatter myself without presumption, by putting me in possession of the excellent letter which you have deigned to write to me ; for which, kissing the hand whence it flowed, I render my most humble thanks for the honour conferred upon me. I have a due sense of the obligation I owe to my friends and patrons, for the favourable light in which they have placed me in your eyes, and shall always try not
to

to disgrace their recommendation, or make you repent the having known me.

At present, I shall neither send you the Drama nor Sonnet, which I promised, as neither is sufficiently polished for your inspection ; but you will hardly find, whenever they come, any marks worthy of a man in commerce with the Muses. A thousand complaints, followed by a terrible cold, have so much diminished my strength, and debilitated my mind, that all my productions must of course be languid. Bear with them, however, such as they are, and believe me, &c.

L E T T E R X I X .

TO THE SAME MODENESE GENTLEMAN,
AT PARIS.

I NEVER thought that my little poem could arrive at such honour and happiness, as to make me envy its fate. The being in every hand and every mouth in Italy ; the having been so often on the * stage, in the princi-

* It does not appear what little Poem is here meant : His celebrated Canzonet, *La Libertà*, never was, or could be brought on the stage, but as a single song.

D 4 -

pal

pal cities ; the having so rapidly passed over mountains and seas : the becoming so dear and familiar to the most distant kingdoms, as already to speak their language ; and penetrating those famous regions of the ocean into which the world is said to be divided, to have had the honour of being printed there, of being heard on their stage and applauded by the people ; all these great and excessive distinctions would not have excited in me so much envy, as the information you give me, that my little Poem is become the delight of the most beautiful, exalted, and respectable ladies of France. I have always wished extremely to visit a kingdom so great, so warlike, powerful, noble, and marvellous ; but now I confess myself so much affected by an invitation from such a worthy patron, and from ladies whom I so much admire and venerate, that being neither able to tolerate, or gratify my excessive longing, it is converted into pain. If the distance from Vienna to Paris were not so great, I should certainly venture to undertake the journey ; but, my dear Sir, I am already old, or (to flatter myself) I may say, that I am no longer young. And to undertake so long a journey with such a weight of years, requires necessity,

necessity, not amusement. I have not sufficient strength to go and return. In short, it appears that I am no longer fit for such journeys, and the less so, as I have no time to lose. May you, Sir, who are so able to enjoy the pleasures of so great a kingdom with honour and delight, manifest your own worth, and receive the homage of so splendid a Court and Sovereign; and above all, of those most beautiful and gracious ladies, in whose service nothing remains for me to do, but to reverence them here, and to thank both them and you most humbly, for deigning to think of me in the midst of the numerous objects with which you are surrounded.

L E T T E R XX.

TO THE SAME, AT MODENA.

I RECEIVED your letter of the 26th of last month, written in the midst of the tumults of the Carnival, and your own affairs.

You seem desirous of knowing my opinion of the merit of your Bishop (*e*). The sub-

(*e*) Monsignore Sabbatini.

limity

limity of his genius equals the profundity of his learning, and the amplitude of his erudition corresponds with his felicity of seizing and illustrating the most abstruse and difficult subjects. The books and pastoral letters which he has composed, are sufficiently rich in sacred and profane learning, to make us comprehend the excellence and extent of his ideas. All Italy has confessed, that in his first employment of minister, as he had wholly merited the confidence of his sovereign, so in the second, of Bishop, he had most worthily fulfilled every part of his ministry. His sermons and writings serve as flambeaux to those who wander in darkness and ignorance, in shewing them the way of salvation. I shall not mention to you the ease with which he has traversed Parnassus. I shall only pray to God that the fruits of his greater labours may encrease the happiness of his flock, in proportion to their excellence.

L E T T E R XXI.

TO THE SAME.

I RETURN you, my most respected Count, the Treatise of *M. Pequet*, on the duties of a minister

minister of state, which you were so obliging as to lend me. I have attentively perused, and found it extremely worthy of the praises with which you have honoured it. It is indeed, somewhat less ample than it should have been. But whoever would build on this foundation, might find a very excellent plan, and materials for constructing a most perfect edifice. But this brevity which in every other part of the work is innocent, seems reprehensible, when he comes to treat of the sincerity and good faith of a Minister. The author just hints at their utility, but so slightly, that he leaves me in doubt whether he thought them superfluous or impracticable. In the false reasoning of short-sighted men, utility always takes place of honesty, as if they could be separated: but after the Florentine Secretary, (Macchiavel) has elevated vice into a science, this principle, no less false than mischievous, which he almost justifies, is become the mysterious doctrine of the cabinet. All the pretended protestations of good faith, are now only used to deceive and impose on the credulous simplicity of us the poor prophane, and are of no more value, than the protestations of servitude and obedience,

obedience, which we every day indiscriminately use in mere civility.

Now it seems to me, as if it would be no difficult task to demonstrate, for the interest of society, and even of these false reasoners themselves, that, *the useful is constantly inseparable from the honest, particularly in the conduct of grave and public affairs.* And I feel the truth of this axiom so forcibly, that I should not despair of proving it to any one, not wholly initiated in political mysteries. What, for example, should we have to oppose to any one who reasoned in the following manner? An artful and insincere minister, would find it impossible to conceal his fraudulent character, from the very nature of falsehood, which is so incompatible with an infinite number of circumstances belonging to truth, that if they were capable of being masked, it is impossible for them all to be foreseen by the human mind.

A minister detected in falsehood, injures *his Prince, the public, and himself.* He injures himself, because a prince of moderate understanding, will never confide in a minister for operations which can be effected by other means. The spur for serving him well, and the bridle for not betraying him, would

would no longer subſiſt. He will injure public affairs, as he will have more chicane to guard againſt: for every one will think himſelf authorized to cheat a knave. And he will likewiſe injure them from his want of weight and credit, which will retard their courſe, and ſometimes totally ſtop all treaty. Contracts will either not be made, or if concluded after a long and tedious negotiation, the buſineſs will be tranſacted with a veteran negociater accuſtomed to ſell braſs for gold. And, finally, it will be miſchievous to his Prince, not only from the difficulty of treating above mentioned, but becauſe it is very natural for the fraudulent dealings of the miniſter, to be the conſequence of orders received from the Prince. A diſcredit which will operate in the ſame manner upon other Princes, as the miniſter's bad character upon other miniſters.

This, and other more clear and cloſe reaſoning, amply extended in all its parts, and enforced frequently by paſſages and examples from the moſt reſpectable ancient and modern authors, if not ſufficient to eradicate ſuch a vice, would probably prevent it from being ſo frequently practiſed without ſhame or remorse. You are certainly furniſhed with talents,

talents, learning, and experience, sufficient for such a laudable undertaking ; and it is a species of duty incumbent on you, to supply the public in writing, with the theory of those truths which you have so long practised.

At my return to Vienna, I shall press you so much to this undertaking, that in order to avoid teasing, you will at length gratify my wishes.

Vienna, October 5, 1752.

Antoine Pecquet, author of the work of which Metaſtaſio has been ſpeaking, was Grand-maſter of the Ponds and Foreſts of Rouen, and ſuperintendant of the military ſchool. He died in 1762, at 58. He was a man of a very cultivated mind, which he conſecrated to politics, philoſophy, and literature. His works conſiſt of an *Analysis of the Spirit of Laws*, 3 vol. 12mo. 1757. *The Foreſt Laws of France*, 2 vol. 4to. 1753. *The Art of Negotiating. Thoughts on Man. An Eſſay on the Employments of Time. Parallel of the Heart, the Mind, and good Senſe.* He tranſlated the *Poſtor fido* of Guarini. *The Amintas* of Taſſo. *The Arcadia* of San- nazarius, and his verſions are read with
pleaſure.

pleasure. The remarks which Metastasio made on his duties of a minister, may not be thought deep, by profound and subtil politicians; but they will be admired by plain honest people, for the rectitude and purity of their morality.

END OF THE FIRST SECTION.

SECTION II.

THE first letter which was written by Metastasio, to any of his correspondents in 1753, seems to have been the following:

LETTER I.

TO THE CAVALIER FARINELLI.

YOUR very dear letter of the 10th of January, which was sent by the courier, has been more than a month on the road. I am unable to solve the enigma. I know that Count Uffeldt, a very exact man, did not send it to me till yesterday. But I have no time at present, for examining the probable motives for its detention, as I am running to Court: and I have only this moment to answer you.

After I had done revising the two Operas which I forwarded to you, I rested a few days; and then tried to develope the half explained ideas of the entertainment which
you

you desire. I have, at length, arranged them in my head, not without calling on St. Anthony, and again resting myself; but, in order that I might not have them to seek again, I threw them rough upon paper. When I was upon the point of delineating the entire plan, without which I never lay the foundation of any structure, behold! there comes an order from Court, for a little Polyphemic Cantata, for two voices. This terminated, a thousand others began to germinate. But to say the truth, all together are not worth a fig, as their present form is only suited to a masquerade: sometimes a little strophe to be sung, as an introduction to a dance; sometimes as a complimentary Epilogue to a Comedy; but the Carnival is long, the Imperial family, thank God, numerous, and if all these pickings at me are not sufficient to afflict me much, they occupy my thoughts at least, and cheat me of them, rather than engage them. But do not be frightend at this, however. I am so eager to serve you, and the characters of the two women that I have imagined, please me so much, that next week I am determined, at all events, to begin to heat the iron. If I am plagued with any further commissions,

I will employ the time I *ought* for them, and for you what I *can*.

I have not yet delivered your letter to Porpora, nor shall I, till I can at the same time furnish him with work. I am fearful that he will be talking of it, and excite a general curiosity throughout the city, as is the case whenever I am writing. I have my reasons for avoiding this bustle, particularly in working for a foreign court. A thing which has not happened before, for two and twenty years.

You act prudently, according to your custom, in having something ready in case of failure: my uncertain health, the manner in which I am circumstanced: the sluggishness of Porpora: the uncertainty after being idle so long, of his fulfilling your ideas: some sinister delay of the post in so long a journey, and a thousand other unforeseen accidents might overset an unthinking being, but not such a one as my dear Gemello, who thinks of and provides for every thing.

Adieu: I have now with me draughtsmen and taylor, in order to transform my serene Arch-dutcheesses into Amazons, and the Arch-duke into a Grecian prisoner. In the midst of all your hurries, love me, as much as I
love

love you, in spite of so indiscreet and intolerable a distance.

Vienna, February 15, 1753.

L E T T E R II.

TO THE SAME.

By dint of perseverance, I have at length, thank heaven, accomplished my design. The day before yesterday I wrote the final chorus, and gave to my labours the last paternal benediction. But the having finished is not my greatest comfort; it is the fancying that what I have done, is the least imperfect of all my works. You will see compressed in a single act, emotions, events, and passions, abundantly sufficient to fill up the time of a long drama. The subject is uncommon; there is novelty in the characters. They weep without being theatrical, and laugh without buffoonery: in short, if self-love does not wholly blind me, the composition, considering the state of my head, is such as I could hardly promise myself, and shews plainly, that the beneficent Deity of the Manzanare has not denied me her influence.

But, alas ! as nothing is to be perfect in this vale of tears, an accident has happened, which has very much imbibtered the joy I had in serving you so well, and in such good time. When I had half done my work, and was thinking of communicating to our Porpora the secret, and giving him some of the words to set, this same Porpora, who notwithstanding his age, has, in general, the health of a Jesuit ; at the very moment I wanted him, was seized with a violent cold and fever, and what is worse, with a strong apprehension of dying ; this not only wholly deprived him of the power of present application, but threatened a very long illness. Grieved at this unexpected inconvenience, I withheld my secret, and proposed to myself the waiting for his recovery. But in going home, and revolving matters in my thoughts, I found that by the least loss of time, it would be morally impossible for the entertainment to arrive at Madrid soon enough for the destined day of performance. I had thoughts of sending you the words without music ; but on a second perusal of your letter, I saw that you had excluded that measure, by pointing out the impracticability, after so long a journey as from Germany to Spain,

Spain, to send the poem from Spain into Italy, to be set and returned in time for the present season. During these agitations, my great eagerness to serve you suggested to me a third resolution, which I hope will be approved, or at least tolerated, as an effect of my true and sincere zeal.

I sent for Sig. Giuseppe Bonno, chamber composer to his Imperial Majesty, a man educated in Naples, at the expence of the Emperor Charles VI. when it abounded with able professors, of good taste, and endowed by nature, with that grace which is incompatible with extravagance; and the only one in short among those who are in this country, from whom I could reasonably expect any thing tolerable. I communicated to him the secret, without mentioning Porpora, imposing on him profound silence; I confided to him the work, animated him with the hopes of acquiring honour, and I flatter myself that he will fulfil my expectations, from what I have already heard, as he is far advanced in the undertaking.

Thus you will have the entertainment which I have written, in time, and if you please, set to music; which will afford you the satisfaction of presenting a new piece to

your admirable Sovereign, on the destined day. If the music should not please you, it may be laid aside, and the delay will be no more than it would have been had we waited for the recovery of Porpora. The whole inconvenience will amount to no more than a small present to Bonno, if his music should not be approved: a present indeed which will neither ruin the Spanish monarchy, nor make the great heart of my Gemello tremble.

Now this entertainment is finished, which lay on my mind, I shall think of the *Licenza*, or complimentary epilogue to *Semiramis*, and of the air which you wish to change. In the mean time, I inclose for you the scene, and the dresses of the entertainment, for which I give you notice, that there will be some rehearsals necessary for the Recitatives, if you wish things to go as they ought.

But I can write no more. As soon as the music is finished and transcribed, I shall pack up this little drama, and try to get it conveyed to you with the utmost speed possible. If I should not have hit your taste, give me credit at least for striving hard to do it, and
 preserve

preserve yourself with care for the sake of your affectionate and constant friend.

Vienna, March, 1753.

L E T T E R III.

TO THE SAME.

By the letter which I received from Madrid, of the 20th of last month; chiefly written by Sig. Rodolfi, I perceive that you wish to have the court of Apollo for the subject of the *Licenza* to *Semiramide*. My wish would be that the Goddess Iris should speak, and not Apollo; and by the leaf inclosed, read with attention, you will perceive how your thought and mine may be conciliated: so that I shall dwell no longer on the subject. At the same time, I inclose the air substituted instead of that which begun thus: *Io veggo in lontananza*: and I hope it will not please you less than the first.

I shall write the words for the *Licenza* as soon as I have breathed a little; of which I have great occasion.

The music of the entertainment is not yet terminated: and I impertinently solicit the poor composer every day. In the mean time,

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I have

I have acquainted Count Azlor of the occasion we shall have for his assistance in forwarding it to you by the first courier that stirs.

I must beg of you to take care that Porpora does not hear of my packet. You know him well enough to be certain that he would not easily listen to reason. His tongue is flippant, I am delicate : and should be sorry if my impatience to serve you, should bring on an unpleasant discussion. My hypondriac sufferings are in great want of peace and tranquillity.

I have published in every conversation, your excessive gratitude for the gracious present from my most august sovereign, and it is impossible but she must have heard of it by this time. I rejoice with my dear Gemello at the honour this will reflect upon his character. These are illustrious occasions which will manifest it to the whole world. Not a Spaniard comes hither of whom I do not instantly enquire after you ; and all speak the same language to me : that your munificent sovereign's love of you, might have been the effect of good fortune ; but to have acquired the love of the whole nation, must infallibly have been your own work. God bless you, and preserve you as
you

you are, and what all those who have the confidence of monarchs should be.

Vienna, March 24, 1753.

My packet is directed to you, and contains my original transcript of the entertainment; the original score of the music, a letter from me and a plan of the machinery for the *Licenza to Semiramis*, with a copy of the words.

I have heard the airs at the harpsichord, and am much pleased, particularly with that for *Sylvia*; and have great hopes that it will likewise have your approbation. Adieu, my dear Gemello.

Vienna, April 7, 1753.

L E T T E R IV.

TO THE SAME.

I WROTE two lines in great haste, merely to accompany the parcel which contains the words and music of *l'Isola disabitata*. Oh, my dear Gemello, how have you contrived to be an honest man, amidst the corruption of the harmonic tribe? This is one of the circumstances which renders you the most worthy

of admiration.. *Bonno*, the composer of the music I send you, has disappointed me day after day, till this moment ; and yet he is one of the most punctual masters that I have ever known. His indolence has occasioned the missing one courier. But I was determined, if possible, that you should have this parcel time enough for your festival, cost what it would. I therefore send it by the post ; and according to my calculation, you will receive it the 29th instant. There will then be a month for studying and rehearsing the parts. I believe their distribution was pointed out to you before ; however, the repetition will cost but little:

COSTANZA *La Signora Mingotti*

SILVIA *La Signora Castelli*

ENRICO *Il Soprano (f)*

GERNANDO *Panzacchi,*

This last cannot well be changed. To represent the husband, he ought of course to be a tenor.

(f) It does not appear who was the principal male Soprano at this time, in the service of the court of Spain. Panzacchi, a tenor of considerable merit, I met with at Munich, in 1772. His voice was not of the first class, but his knowledge, taste, and expression, were excellent. Mingotti came hither first in 1754, immediately from Spain. See *German Tour*, and *Hist. Music*, vol. iv.

I recom-

I recommend to you to have the recitative rehearsed, and to inspire a little innocence into the Castelli, at least during the time of representation. Salute her in my name, and tell her to dissemble her malice, for my sake, if she has any.

I send you at the same time, the words of the *Licenza* to *Semiramis*, and an explanation of the machinery, as it should appear in the printed book. And now I have fulfilled all your commands,

L E T T E R V.

TO THE SAME.

LAST week I received a very satisfactory letter from you, which was merely an answer to mine: hence, in expectation of another, I waited ere I answered this, in order to save you trouble. This week I receive another, dated the 20th of last month, in which there are replies, proposals, and commissions: and here I shall try to satisfy you in every point.

In the first place, I inclose you, a new *Licenza*, which I produced yesterday in a miraculous manner, during the most cruel
nervous

nervous sufferings. You certainly remember the fable which supposes that when *Hercules* was conceived, the Sun stood still, and lengthened the night: and this being premised, I hope you will find the idea of the *Licenza* not unworthy of the subject.

The same machinery will do for this as for the court of Apollo; but it must be remembered, that in the first *Licenza* Apollo spoke, as conductor of the muses; and in this, only as conductor of the day; and on this account, I never call him Apollo, but merely *Sol*. For which reason, I wish you to take away from his attendants, the instruments which were probably assigned to them, that they may pass for the attendant hours necessary in this new *Licenza*. The change is so inconsiderable, that it will be scarce perceptible; and if you are unwilling to adopt it, need not even be made. What pity it is that I was not born a female! can poetical docility go further? But who could resist a fellow twin?

Vienna, May 19, 1753.

The *Licenza* mentioned here, is inserted at the end of the preceding letter, and is different from that which is printed at the end of the opera of *Semiramide*, corrected by the
Author,

Author, in the fifth volume of Calfabigi's edition of Metastasio's works, *Paris*, 1755. Though this, as well as the other, turns upon hyperbolical compliments to Ferdinand VI. yet, as it seems not to have had admission among his dramatic pieces, the reader shall be presented with a copy of it here, as a supplement to the letter in which it was inclosed.

L I C E N Z A.

*Lo so: tacete, Ore seguaci: al corso
 Voi m'affrettate in van: dal cielo Ibero
 Non sperate ch'io parta in sì gran giorno.
 So ben che il mio ritorno
 Dell'opposto emisfero
 Già l'inquieto abitator sospira:
 So che già desto ammira
 L'ostinata sua notte; il pertinace
 Scintillar delle Stelle, e la dimora
 Della sorda a' suoi voti infida aurora.
 Ma il soffra in pace: e pensi
 Ch'oggi nasce un FERNANDO. Antica in cielo
 Solenne legge è questa.
 Perchè nascan gli Alcidi, il Sol s'arresta.
 Ma d'esser non pretenda
 Eguale al Nume Ispano
 Benchè l'Eroe Tebano
 Pur m'arrestò così.
 La differenza intenda
 Chi dilatar mi vide
 La notte per Alcide
 Ma per Fernando il dì.*

Ma &c.

Licenza,

Licenza, or complimentary epilogue intended for the opera of *Semiramis*, when brought on the stage at the court of Spain, by Farinelli, 1753.

APOLLO SPEAKS.

I know it well: silence ye hasty hours;
In vain ye press me to pursue my course.
Think not that I shall quit the Iberian shore,
Precipitate on this illustrious day.
Th' impatience of the other hemisphere
I know, each chill'd inhabitant awakes
And wonders lingering night so long remains.
While pertinacious stars still sparkle round
And make Aurora deaf to all their prayers.
But let them patient bear the transient ill,
And know that this auspicious day
Produced a FERDINAND.
But when the great Alcides first had birth,
Whose deeds from monsters was to free the earth,
I stopt my course—Be still ye distant climes,
'Tis the celestial law of ancient times.

Though at the Theban heros' birth
I check'd my fiery steeds,
The Spanish chief's superior worth
A different homage needs.

Great Jove himself I sure shall please
By zeal I now display:
I might prolong'd for Hercules,
For Ferdinand the day:

L E T T E R VI.

TO THE CAVALIER FARINELLI.

IF I had been a prophet as well as a poet, I should have predicted so happy a reception to my little piece, as to have called it rather the fortunate, than the DESERT ISLAND. The magnificent recompence which it has procured me, so far surpasses its intrinsic worth, that I find much more difficulty in framing proper thanks, than in bringing it forth.

You from whose kind and friendly hands the royal munificence passes into mine, must assist me in this dilemma : and humbly offer for me at the foot of the throne, those just sentiments of respect, reverence, and gratitude, which eagerly rise in such crowds from my heart, that neither the tongue nor the pen can give them utterance. You who have not only long known, but been in possession of my heart, can be answerable for the truth of these expressions ; and accustomed as you are to neglect yourself for the advantage of others, do you procure me the continuance
of

of a patronage which will do me so much honour in the eyes of all Europe.

It was wise in you to provide me so light a waistcoat: You foresaw that the weight of royal favour would have made me sweat even under the bear's tail. I am extremely obliged to you for so useful and friendly a thought, in which you are discoverable, though masqued.

I have been present at Aranjuez all the time I was reading your letter. The minute, ample, clear and lively description which you have given me of this festival, has transported me into Spain. I have seen the theatre, the ships, the embarkation, the enchanted palace; I have heard the trills of my incomparable Gemello (g); and have venerated the royal aspect of your divinities. This affectionate attention in making me a guest, as much as was possible at such a distance, in this delicious Iberian magnificence, and with so much trouble to yourself, awakens tender reflections on the stability of your matchless friendship, and binds you to my heart with stronger claims than ever.

(g) This clears up the difficulty of naming the *first Soprano* to whom the part of *Enrico* was assigned.

The

The Marquis del Paolo has written a very long letter to his brother at Vienna, in which he only speaks of you. He is charmed, astonished, and confused, at the polite reception which you have given him on my account. Imagine to yourself how I must have been affected by these constant, amiable, and indubitable, proofs of your partial affection for me. Where is the wonder, that you should become the delight of this generous and enlightened nation? I defy Envy herself, not to detest her own character, in contemplating yours. Heaven preserve you for the delight of your sovereigns, the service of your friends, and the justification of fortune; who, by your single example, may defend herself sufficiently from all former accusations.

I rejoice that the Counts Valmerana go on so well; and rejoice the more, at their good fortune being derived from you. I have not the honour to know them; and my zeal for their service is the child of the Venetian Ambassador, who entreated me to recommend them. I have told so many people that I have an affection for you, and you have said to so many others, that you have a regard for me, that at present every body knows it.

Hence it is, that I am so continually besieged by persons who wish me to pester you with recommendations. I defend myself from these attacks like a lion; and yet there are cases in which it is impossible to drive it into some people's heads, that two lines of recommendation cannot be refused without rudeness and inhumanity. Now in such streights it is necessary, that we should agree not to regard every letter as a draught on friendship, which must be paid by trouble and inconvenience, any more than we mean to wear the livery of every owl to whom we say, *your servant*. Whenever you shall seriously permit me to make use of your friendship, I will advertise you of it in a confidential letter; and without this previous advice, I entreat you not to regard my recommendations as transfers of your friendship: otherwise I shall be full of remorse, and think myself importunate, to the person in the world whose kindness I should be most unwillingly to abuse.

I have told *Bonno* that his music succeeded, without entering into other circumstances, which would perhaps have mortified him. If ever he should hear any thing of its miscarriage, I shall then explain the facts, and convince him, that necessity, not disapprobation,

tion, occasioned the variation which happened. In the mean time, I am unwilling to apply the remedy before the disease is felt.

I do not mean to exact from you the smallest sacrifice in behalf of the Duke *di santa Elisabetta*. I mentioned him to you without a second intention. This nobleman has long resided at Vienna. He was frequently at the Countess d'*Althan's conversazioni*; is very studious, and particularly fond of poetry. Hence, by means of talking much together, we acquired a kind of familiarity. This made me remember to mention him to you, when I found he was going to Madrid; not without a little of that envy which I feel for all those who have the happiness to see and embrace you. But put no kind of violence on your inclination; do by him just as you would, if I had never mentioned him to you; as I have absolutely no other wish, than that of leaving my incomparable Gemello to his inclinations.

Your last letter found me in an ephemeral fever, which obliged me to keep the house for some days, and prevented me from answering you as soon as I wished. Thank heaven I am now better, but the poor head still protests against hard labour. Be thank-

ful for this, if I do not plague you much longer to-day : as, according to my present humour, you would not otherwise have come off so easily.

Adieu, therefore, for this time. I do not entreat your love : as after such certain and frequent proofs, it would be ingratitude to doubt of it. But I beg you, however, to believe, that my gratitude, friendship, and affection for you, exceed all bounds ; and that with an unexampled constancy, I shall be eternally yours.

L E T T E R VII.

TO THE SAME.

THOUGH I respect your occupations, and try, as much as possible, to avoid the decorous title of tiresome ; Yet I cannot refrain, every now and then, from giving you a transient embrace, at least. Just to awaken in you the idea of our tender friendship. This temptation is constant ; but it is increased to a most violent degree, when any one either speaks or writes to me about you. This same Duke *di santa Elisabetta*, has talked so much to me of your being justly
adored

adored by the Spanish nation, and of your affection for me, that, though I knew these particulars perfectly before, yet I want to hear them repeated every instant. Circumstanced as you are, to have converted into love, that malignant fermentation which has contaminated all the poor descendants of Adam, with the indigestion of the unfortunate apple, is an enterprize which has few examples. All the rest may be ascribed to fortune; but this can only have been accomplished by yourself. I have not now the least doubt of it: my accounts are too constant, numerous, and consistent. If they are false, the whole universe must have conspired in deceiving me: a thing morally impossible.

We shall here have represented at court, on St. Theresa's day, my *Clemenza di Tito*. The command from my most august patrons, has been so entirely unexpected, that, from the extreme shortness of the time, it will be miserably executed. The singers, who have been collected in eight days, are not equal to the enterprize for which they are called. They either consist of people unknown, or worse. The Casarini, the Marini, the Ghiringella, the Curioni, Mariannino,

Mariannino, and Ottani, a painter, are the heroes and heroines of this festival (*b*). The composer is a certain Adolfati, a Venetian, settled at Genoa; all fruits wholly foreign to our climate. I shall give you no account of their success, because in such cases, every one is endowed with the gift of prophecy.

Previous to this performance, I shall go into the country, to refresh my lungs with the balsamic air of the mountains of Moravia, in order to fortify my stomach for the dose. But I should neither have been able to hope for a fortunate journey, nor advantage from my residence, if I had stirred without embracing my dear Gemello, and thanking him for his partiality to me, which I hear from all quarters. You may safely believe that mine is perfectly reciprocal, and that I neither will nor can be otherwise than yours,

Vienna, September 11, 1753.

(*b*) The *Casarini* was here in 1746, as second woman, and the *Curioni* in 1755, as third, and were in no higher favour with the English, than with Metastasio. Of Ottani some account is given, in the *Italian Musical Tour*, art. TURIN.

LET.

L E T T E R VIII.

TO THE SAME.

I WISH to answer your letter of the 22d of last month, most amply, with respect to your indisposition; and very briefly, on account of my own. But what my poor head will suffer me to do I know not; so cruelly has it been tormented for these four days past, by my usual tension of nerves, which irritate me, from time to time, beyond that portion of patience with which I am furnished for common insults. But you are not to blame; and it is not fair that you should be punished with tiresome complaints of my ailments. What I speak and write to you, my dear friend, is what I think, not what I say; and I do not write all, lest I should be thought by those who are not acquainted with me, one of the common worshippers of your fortune: which I only love in you, as an instrument, by means of which you discover the good qualities of your heart: among which I must, for my own sake, enumerate the admirable constancy of your friendship.

If it is true that you are pleased at all the world knowing it, you may be perfectly satisfied: for our reciprocal affection is so public in every part of Europe, that I am perpetually teased by different people from Naples, Rome, Venice, Milan, and a hundred other parts of Italy and Germany, to implore your protection. I am extremely flattered by this; but assure you, that I frequently pass for a misanthrope, for not adding my importunities to the too great number of those with which you must be constantly pestered.

Before I received your minute relation, I was informed of the royal pomp and masterly exactness, with which my *Semiramide*, thanks to your experience and assiduity, was brought on the stage. I am pleased, but not surprised; it is easy to foresee the reception of what you undertake.

You have treated with *Jomelli* in your own way, and he has fulfilled the articles in his: that is to say, like a *blockhead* of the first class. I pity him; but his indolence is so excessive, that it produces all the effects of malice. I fear that fortune will be tired of favouring him. God send he may ever subdue this infirmity. In the mean time, I applaud your
resolution

resolution of never again using so uncertain an instrument. *Signora Mingotti* will many times in her life regret the banks of the *Manzanare*, which she now so unadvisedly abandons. I believe the sacred words *nescitis quid petatis*, are particularly applicable to this kind of people.

I wrote you word sometime ago, that the *Mattei* was a woman not without merit; but I did not conceal from you, that I should have wished for a little more dignity in her figure and voice. Both are good, but not quite sufficient for the first parts. However, scarcity has seconded her pretensions in Italy.

I hope she will not have the imprudence to overrate herself in negotiating with you for the theatre royal. I am not in a situation to assist you in treating with her, as we are not in correspondence. She has made all Italy believe that I was in love with her: a falsity which does such discredit to my good taste, has so much offended me, that I have never answered the letters she has written to me, for fear of giving weight to a fable which has no foundation in truth. If you should see her, you will judge, and do justice to your friend,

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I shall turn the circumcision of *Alexander* in my thoughts. But my dear Gemello, the enterprize frightens me ; for this drama is all action, not words. The scenes are so connected, that retrenching any one, would dislocate the machine.

If *Semiramis* was long, what opera can be short? However, what is the work I would not undertake to please you? I must tell you, however, that the obstinate persecutions of my head will not permit much application. I should be inconsolable, if I acted the part of Jomelli.

I beg you will present my affectionate and constant respects to *Monsignor Migazzi*, and to the Duke of *Santa Elizabetta* ; I envy you their company, as much as I envy them the enjoyment of yours. Oh that I could once more embrace my dear Gemello ! But how I rave? These are poetical ideas ; and yet I will give way to as much hope, as will cherish a wish of which I would not be deprived. Adieu, my excellent Gemello. Pity my head, and believe me, &c.

P. S. I directed your letter to our *Porpora*, and he has sent me the inclosed in answer, without a word to myself : and I forward it, without another word on the subject.

II

Il Sassone (Hafse) left this place about two months ago. He spoke much to me about you, and with that esteem that is your due. However, he seemed extremely mortified, that you had answered none of the letters he had written to you. I suggested to him, that it was likely they had miscarried, and he begged of me to inform you of them. I fulfill my promise to a man who deserves as much consideration for his character and manners, as for his professional excellence.

Vienna, November 30, 1753.

L E T T E R IX.

TO THE SAME.

I HAVE now to answer your most affectionate letter of the 11th of November, with which I received a copy of *Semiramis*, in its Spanish dress. I thank you for your kind attention, and proceed to answer your request.

When I wrote *ADRIANO*, I tried to make the parts of *Adriano* and *Farnaspe* as equal as possible ; as well as those of *Emirena* and *Sabina*. Indeed *Adriano* and *Sabina* are, in fact, the principal characters ; they form the principal

principal subject of the drama, and their importance becomes more considerable, as the business advances. Notwithstanding this, from the vivacity of the first scenes of *Farnaspe*, all the fingers have been deceived, and have often made me the same request as you do at present. It seems a matter of choice whether *Adriano* and *Sabina*, or *Farnaspe* and *Emirena*, are regarded as the principal parts. But in fact, *Adriano* is the title of the opera, and between him and *Sabina* the principal business is transacted. *Emirena* is only introduced to try the virtue of *Adriano*, who finally vanquishes himself; and this triumph of his virtue, is the action represented. The distribution therefore of the parts, depending more on policy than science, does not seem to belong to me; who not being on the spot, am ignorant of many circumstances necessary to be known, previous to a decision. All I can say with sincerity is, that if I were a first man singer, I would represent the part of *Adriano*, and if a female Siren, it would please me more to be a Roman Empress, full of generosity and virtue, than a slave, enamoured like a cat.

I have already circumcised the first act of *Alessandro*. Oh what a butchery! I have
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cut out two hundred and sixty-six verses, and three airs. My dear Gemello, this most ungrateful business should not have been mine. To make one's self a Eunuch with one's own hands, is a sacrifice of which there are few examples. But it must be done, and I hope the representation will receive advantage from it.

You cannot possibly wish more for a new opera of my writing, than I to furnish you with one; and I have it always in my thoughts; but not to tire you with the repetition of all the cock and bull stories which I have formerly told you, I beg of you to reflect, that on the birth-day of my august mistress, there was an opera represented here at court, and this opera was *La Clemenza di Tito*. This text needs no comment. Addio.

Vienna, December 15, 1753.

No more than two letters to his friend Filipponi, of this year, have been preserved. The first is not very important; but the second, which concerns the long meditated edition of his works, by Rabj of Turin, will furnish the reader with the author's own ideas of all his productions, which were then ready for the press.

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L E T T E R X.

TO SIG. FILIPPONI.

YOUR last letter of the 14th of April, afforded me very great pleasure, like all the rest, except that this was rendered unusually relishing, by long fasting from your literary food. There has not been the least change in my health, either for better or worse, in the course of the whole winter, and spring. I have been nearly eight years at war with my hypochondriac complaints; but, in spite of such long trials, we have never yet found the way to an accommodation. In other respects, I eat, sleep, and in the midst of the most cruel attacks, put so good a face on the matter, that I am more regarded with envy than pity. The best of it is, that I give myself no more trouble in trying to get rid of these torments, as hope has entirely left me. I reckon that I shall have a hump-back, which I am disposed to carry patiently, for the rest of my life, with as much care and grace as possible (*i*).

(*i*) Twenty years after this letter was written, the poet was somewhat curved by age; but his clerical cloak of Abate, rendered it very little visible.

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I was very glad to see the Italic type of your *Rabj*, because it makes me hope that the Roman will be as good. Indeed I should advise him to use the latter for the verse. The first will please learned Italians, but all the rest of Europe, particularly the ladies, prefer the Roman. I shall be glad to see a proof; at all events the edition will be seen by our great grand-children, and we shall hear of it in the Elysian fields. I thank you for the beautiful sonnet which you communicated to me, and partake of the pain it has cost you; but we must not unbind the wounds.

Vienna, May 7, 1753.

L E T T E R XI.

TO THE SAME.

IN spite of all the eloquence of your excellent letter of the 30th of June, I would not have you flatter yourself that your hypochondria is worthy of being compared with mine; for this plain reason, that it admits of description. The complaints which honour me with their most vigilant company, disdain the limits of eloquence, unless these evils should be like wives, each of whom,
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they say is thought by the husband, more ugly than his neighbour's.

The specimen sent me of the type intended to be used by *Sig. Rabj.* is entirely to my satisfaction. I shall send him a list of all that I have written, or rather of all that has been published for mine. And he will distribute to each volume the operas and dramatic compositions, as well sacred as profane, according to the bulk of its contents; which by a mixture of long and short, may easily be rendered uniform. In short, the following seems the proper arrangement. All the Dramatic poetry, sacred and profane, long and short, should be assigned to the first volumes; so that each may contain four or five pieces at most; mixing Oratorios, occasional pieces, or other dramatic compositions, sufficient to render the volume of a proportionate size, without attention to chronology, which is of no consequence to the author or reader (*k*).

(*k*) Such an attention, however, would have been of great use to a musical historian, in ascertaining the time when a great composer or singer first began to flourish; and in the last edition of his works, printed at Paris after his own memorandums, the time when, as well as occasion and place where, each of his dramatic pieces was first performed, have been recorded.

After these, the Lyric poetry should have place : that is, the Cantatas, Sonnets, and Canzonets. And, finally, the pieces which have been printed at Venice, by Bettinelli, in the third volume of his quarto edition, under the title of *Additions*. By these are implied whatever I wrote at a premature age, or rather in my puerile state ; as the tragedy of *Justin*. Pray desire him to place these abominable *Additions* at the end of all the rest, preceded by the Venetian printer's advertisement ; with this running title at the top of the page ; (like act i. act ii, &c.) in order, when the book is opened by chance, that my childish productions may not be ascribed to mature age. I have reduced into a better form, *Didone*, *Adriano*, *Semiramide* ; and have added a fourth character to the *Ballo Cinese*. I have written a short drama for Madrid, entitled *L'Isola disabitata*. I have collected my cantatas, and freed them from the blunders of the press ; adding some inedited pieces, and excluding those that have been falsely ascribed to me. All these I shall make no difficulty in communicating to *Sig. Robj* ; but he must appoint somebody in Vienna to transcribe and transmit them to him.

Say to the venerable priestess, and amiable and serene little Nun, in my name, all that a tender friend, father, and husband, can suggest.

Vienna, July 26, 1753.

L E T T E R XII.

TO THE ABATE PASQUINI.

YOUR gratitude goes beyond the pillars of Hercules, and I dare not stop short of you ; a good journey to you : and may I see you well at your return.

Affisted by the sweetmeats of some gracious expressions in your letter, I have contrived to introduce a conversation concerning your affair with the Count de Richécourt, hoping by this means to shorten the long period of formality for which you have such an aversion. He laughed, applauded, and allowed that you merited the Island of *Barataria* ; but said that it was impossible to dispense with the forms consecrated by custom. So, my dear friend, make use of him with œconomy, that he may not fail you at your need.

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All I can do, will be done; but that all is an atom, impalpable to the will which I have to serve you. You are not likely to grow fat upon such zeal; but it will at least be a manifestation of the constancy, and sincerity, with which I shall ever be yours.

Vienna, July 19, 1753.

No writer seems to have framed compliments and felicitations with more grace, facility, and elegance, than our author.

The brother of his friend, *Sig. Argenvilliers*, the banker at Rome, having at this time, been created a Cardinal, produced the two following letters.

L E T T E R XIII.

TO SIG. ARGENVILLIERS.

You know how much I owe you, and are not ignorant of my affection; you have therefore in your hands the measure of my joy at the deserved promotion of your most worthy brother to the sacred purple. Indeed my joy is so excessive, that it has degenerated into the temerity of writing to him, without

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a sufficient

a sufficient title to his indulgence for such a liberty. Do you, my dear friend, make my apology for the impropriety of this transport. If you believe that the inclosed letter will not offend, seal, present, and honour it with the advantage of your countenance ; but if you should be of a different opinion, spare me the shame of becoming importunate, by too great an eagerness to shew my respect and veneration : I shall patiently await your decision.

Envy, which is one of the least defects of which I feel myself culpable, has, however, a little disturbed me at the number of friends who are surrounding you on this occasion. And why cannot I be of the number ? Patience !

L E T T E R XIV.

TO THE SAME.

I HAVE now to answer your most obliging letter of the 27th of November, which confirms the well merited promotion of his Eminence the Cardinal your brother, and the enlightened discernment of his Holiness, who would not allow so useful an instrument to

be far from the throne. I take so much part in this event, that it seems as if I participated of the advantages, and the honour. May you, my dear friend, to the utmost extent of my wishes, enjoy a pleasure so solid, and so much approved by all good men! Continue your affection for me, and present to his Eminence, your brother, my most respectful duty.

Vienna, December 17, 1753.

LETTER XV.

TO SIG. FILIPPONI.

I WAS obliged to defer answering your last letter of the 15th of December, by the impediment of a little voyage to Parnassus, which I have been constrained to make against my will, and which has been attended with more pains than profit. I am now to expiate the *mora, sacculo parato*.

You, who have procured me the inestimable favours, with which the worthy *Abate Pasini*, and his most noble society have honoured me, will I hope, return them, in my name, with the same eloquence, the most lively protestations of my gratitude and

respect, without parsimony of expressions; and, as a proof of my acknowledgements, advise them sincerely, on my part, to desist from the design of honouring my writings with a Turin republication. There are already in every city of Italy, more editions than contribute to my credit. They can be purchased every where at the lowest price, and I am certain, that this noble society would run the risk of being great losers, in spite of their most prudent precautions of a small size, insignificant cuts, the addition of inedited pieces, and dedications, &c. But what ought chiefly, and absolutely, to deter them, is the new edition printing at Paris, of which I have seen several proofs, and which is so far advanced, that it will be published in a very short time.

Vienna, 14, 1754:

L E T T E R XVI.

TO THE SAME.

THE friendly impatience of my dear Filippini at my silence, sweetly stimulates activity, and exacts from me a most grateful acknowledgement. Your letters are always
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most acceptable to me, and I should more frequently deserve them, if the number of mad Italians who pester me with their correspondence, allowed me a moment's leisure on post days. But my dear friend, I am the butt at which all the insects of Parnassus are constantly shooting. I leave the chief part of them to hum and buz, at their pleasure; but those whom the indispensable rules of society oblige me to respect, are more than sufficient to absorb all my time and patience. I know that I am not only sure of your forgiveness, but compassion. I ought to have answered the Paris editor of my works two months ago; but have not been able to obtain a moment for that purpose. God knows what this good christian will say of me. And, indeed, what will you say of me? The history is not long. The impression ought to have been out next month; but I fear that my involuntarily delays will prevent it.

I beg a thousand tender compliments may be presented in my name to the venerable priestess, and to all the sacred and profane Filipponic family. My health deserves no notice either from its good or bad state; I therefore hastily embrace you, and beg the

continuance of your affection, and belief that I am, &c.

Vienna, May 17, 1754.

LETTER XVII.

TO SIG. RANIERI DE CALSABIGI (1).

THE information with which Sig. *Calsabigi* has favoured me, concerning the elegant edition of all my poetical writings, of which he has lately been so obliging as to undertake the care, has not a little excited my vanity. Reasoning in my own favour, as we are all but too prone to do, I flatter myself, that the enterprise implies some call for

(1) The editor, panegyrist, and afterwards dramatic rival, and censurer, of Metastasio's style. He is author of the three operas of *Orfeo*, *Alceste* and *Paride*, which were set by Gluck, in a new dramatic style, that has been adopted by the French, and violently praised by all those who love poetry better than music. The French who have frequently fine voices, but no great singers, do well to depreciate the vocal abilities of the Italians, which can enchant all other foreign nations, without their having the least knowledge of the language in which they sing. Indeed it is not merely the simplicity of Gluck's style that pleases the French, but the having formed it upon *Lully* and *Rameau*, to whose strains Gallic ears will long continue partial.

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my works : that this call promises patrons ; and that these may perhaps procure them the general favour of so cultivated, ingenious, and enlightened a nation as that of France ; an honour to which I never before durst elevate my hopes, further than merely to keep desire alive. To find therefore the superintendence of this enterprize in such expert and friendly hands as yours, assures me, that, in future, I shall have no errors but my own to blush for ; and not those that, thanks to the shameful carelessness of printers, abound in the numerous editions with which it is hard to say, whether our country has hitherto persecuted or distinguished me.

Though my paternal tenderness may safely confide in the affectionate tutelage which you have undertaken of my children, it is however my duty to endeavour to ease you as much as possible of the weight and fatigue with which you have loaded yourself ; and not decline assisting you as much as my indispensable employments, uncertain health, and great distance from the press, will allow.

If it be true, that wholesome council is of any value, I shall begin by advising you not to depend on the Venetian editions, not even that of 1733, in quarto, as to the opinion of
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its superiority over its corrupt followers, the the perpetuating many errors is due. These editions have been multiplied from year to year, and augmented in size, without my consent, by cantatas, and canzonets, under my name, which I never wrote; or if mine, so lame, incorrect, and disfigured, that I scarcely could recognise them.

The editions therefore of Rome, Naples, Milan, Piacenza, and in short, all that have come from the Italian press, copied from the early editions of Venice, add to their own, all the impurities of their muddy source.

To render your edition superior to every other, I ought to undertake a general correction of all my writings, and transmit to you a fair copy of them: An enterprize which I have no time to take in hand, nor you to wait for its completion. All I can therefore do, is merely to point out to you a few such errors as, from their enormity, are fixed in my memory; and, afterwards, consign and recommend to your learning, diligence, and friendship, the discovery and correction of the rest. Who knows but I may be a gainer by this want of leisure, to do my own work? your partiality for the author, may incline you sometimes to ascribe to the printers, his own faults, and procure him corrections,

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which your delicacy would perhaps have deprived him of, had you known their true origin.

But that my whole assistance may not be reduced to mere advice, I send you, in the first place, a very correct transcript from the original MS. of my cantatas, which have either not been published, or are entirely freed from the injuries which they have long suffered from unskilful hands.

You have likewise *LE CINESI*, formerly printed under the title of a *dramatic composition, written as the prologue to a dance*; but now augmented with a new character, which by enlivening the business, and rendering the conduct of the piece more interesting, may, perhaps, give it some small pretensions to novelty.

To this I add my *Ifola disabitata*; a drama in which I have studiously tried to preserve the unities, notwithstanding the time of representation is strictly limited to an hour. This, though lately printed at Madrid, has not yet appeared in any preceding collection of my works.

With these pieces you will receive four of my first dramas, new written; and, as I think, considerably improved. These are
Didone,

Didone, Adriano, Semiramide, and Alessandro; in which I thought there appeared some tediousness in the action, juvenile ambition in the ornaments, uncertainty in the characters, or coldness in the catastrophe: defects which easily escape the thoughtlessness of youth; but which are not so easily forgiven by that mature judgment which is derived from years and experience: an advantage which costs us too much, not to make a good use of it. Finally, I transmit to you a faithful list of all my poetry of every kind, which has hitherto seen the light. And with the assistance of this, you may safely exclude from your edition, as spurious, those pieces which, with too much generosity, have been ascribed to me in the Venetian editions.

I should have wished, that none of my poetical compositions might appear in the Paris impression, which favoured too much of my adolescent state; particularly the tragedy of *Justin*, written by me at fourteen years of age.

But I foresee that you would be unwilling to render your impression less ample than the others; taught by experience, that the merit of an edition is more frequently determined by the size, than contents. I beg of you, therefore, to spare my blushes as long as you can,

can, by throwing into the utmost confines of the last volume, all the pieces which were printed by Bettinelli in the first edition, under the title of *Additions*, and not forget to let them be prefaced by my chronological defence.

You must not expect any new protestations of my gratitude, nor further recommendations of my writings to your care. I know that the first would be insufficient, and the second unnecessary; I shall therefore add nothing to the sincere assurances of regard, with which I have the honour to be, &c.

Vienna, March 9, 1754.

L E T T E R XX.

TO THE ABATE PASQUINI.

You do me justice, in believing me sincerely attached to you, and injure me much if you imagine that the infrequency of your letters can incline me to doubt of your affection.

The proofs I have tried to give of my friendship, are sureties for yours; and I defy all the silence of *Harpocrates*, to make me doubt of it. Notwithstanding this, your
letter

letter was most welcome ; as by its chearful complexion, I imagined that neither moral nor physical causes obliged you at present to exercise your patience. I congratulate myself as well as you, upon this ; as I have constantly participated in all the rigour of your ill fortune.

And so you are determined to pass from the stage to the pulpit ? *Bonis avibus*. Your extreme love of truth preceded this phenomenon. Happy you, who will be the Maestro di Capella, and the actor of your own dramas, and who will undertake to persuade a people already persuaded ! If Sienna was a few ports nearer, I should feel myself diabolically tempted to be converted by you ; but at such a distance, I can only recommend my conversion to your prayers, my friendship to your memory, and my services to your commands. Adieu.

Vienna, May 27, 1754

We must not omit the usual annual extracts from our Bard's letters to his friend the banker at Rome ; to whom those of business are generally embellished with politeness, affection, and sometimes with original wit and pleasantry.

In

In a letter written to him July 29th of this year, after accounts were ballanced, he says: "Thus all our business is settled to the present time, except the useless and injurious excuses with which you have affronted me: as if I could be uneasy at so trifling a delay in remitting the usual ballance of our accounts! In the first place, I shall fairly own to you, that I never had once thought of it; as my temperament corresponds marvellously with my circumstances, which have never oppressed me with many economical cares. And I must likewise tell you, that without injuring yourself and me, you could not imagine that a man could be at all disturbed about a paltry account, who knowing and loving you as I do, would cheerfully confide to you his whole self, certain of its being in better hands than his own. I therefore expect an excuse for your excuses, and insist on it, that in future you believe me to be a better judge of the weight and worth of such friends, as well as of my obligations to you. Appease me with some commission."

In his next letter to him, he says: Advice of money placed to a man's own credit is always sure of being well received. Consider

sider then how welcome must that be which comes from you, who have the power, by your letters, of sweetning every kind of loss. I return you my most sincere and lively thanks for your exactitude, and still more for that affectionate friendship which animates your most indifferent expressions, and which I reckon the most pleasant and profitable part of our intercourse"—“The cold has driven me back to Vienna, without any sensible advantage from my excursion this year into Moravia. I hope you have been more fortunate in your country retreat, and armed yourself against the assaults of winter, who has already sent hither his precursors.”—“Your affectionate letter of the 16th of last month, confirms, by your obliging solicitude for my health, the sincerity of your love; a possession of which I am more proud and jealous, than of the most precious of my acquisitions. My extraordinary complaints, thank heaven, are subdued; and I now remain in the usual most faithful company of habitual hypochondriacs, which, during many years have exercised my patience.”

“Her Majesty, my Patroness, was inclined to visit Trieste, and Croatia, during the fine weather, and preparations were made for it; but

but all at once the idea was abandoned, or at least its execution deferred. Concerning a journey to Milan, I have not heard a syllable, nor do I believe it ever was in meditation. But if it were to take place, without a positive sovereign command, contrary to my repeated supplications, I should not be in the suite.

You cannot imagine how inconvenient it would be, to such a little insect as me, to be obliged to follow the court. I have a journey to Rome in my head; but then it must be free, and tranquil, that I may enjoy with my whole soul, the company of such a worthy and dear friend as you are. In the meantime, receive my most affectionate ideal embraces, and believe me &c."

Metastasio had been stimulated to think of a journey to Rome this year, not only by his filial affection for that city, and the many relations and friends it contained; but by a letter from the Marchese Partrizi, who had been desired by the Pope himself to invite him thither, to which the following is an answer.

L E T T E R XIX.

TO THE MARCHESE GIOVANNI PATRIZI.

WITHOUT that natural sensibility of heart, with which I have been long tormented, my contagious commerce for so many years with the most violent passions; would have been sufficient to soften me : if, according to poetical canons, it is necessary to feel ourselves, before we can communicate feeling to others; judge then of the effect of your ingenious, obliging, and unexpected letter. If a few simple lines from you, Sir, in testimony of that regard of which I am so ambitious, yet hopeless of meriting, were sufficient to affect and agitate me, where was the necessity of attacking me with all the seducing powers of eloquence? why overpower me with arms against which there is no defence? The exaggeration of the duties of a citizen towards his country; the display of reciprocal friendship; of the ties of blood; and the malicious incitement of my poetical vanity, by assurances of a flattering reception from the public, were *stimuli* more than sufficient

ficient to distress me. But not content with these, determined on victory, to oppress me, you present to my mind, not only the benevolent sovereign remembrance, but almost the beneficent impatience of a prince, whom I not only venerate with the submission of a subject, but respect with the gratitude of a disciple, and honour with the reverence of a son. If no other victory was proposed, than to inflame me with the desire of once more visiting the Tarpeian rock, I was vanquished before the assault was made. I love my country; remember my friends; have a tender affection for my kindred; and am not exempt from the vanity of my peers; and propose, as the summit of all felicity, to obtain that desired kiss, which I always flatter myself I shall some time or other impress upon the most holy foot. But who, my most respected Marquis, *who can do all that he wishes?*

Of the Pope it may be said: *omnia potest*; but never of a poor insect of Parnassus, like me, obliged to proportion his desires exactly with his faculties. If you should happen to think that I have a hundred horsemen on the banks of the *Ister*, as *Alessandro Guidi* had on those of *Alphæus*, you do my stable too much honour, which is by no means so

magnificently furnished. Besides, my journey must be by land, on which we do not travel so rapidly as in the clouds. I know that to a gentleman who in his travels has merited the praise of Ulysses : *Qui mores hominum multorum vidit et urbes*, the difficulties of a little journey from Vienna to Rome, appears ridiculous ; but in the first place, it must be remembered, that I am no longer in that ardent time of life, when inconveniences are the foundation of pleasure ; and that what vigour remains must not be lavished imprudently, as it is sufficiently diminished daily, by the treachery of time. Besides that, I have been a bird of court, almost *ab immemorabili* ; not one in the woods, but used to ease, comfort, and repose ; and unable to fly here and there, at a venture, exposed to all the severities of the season ; so that to be safe conducted, I must be transported in my cage, with my water-glass, and keeper, to supply my wants. But to leave all these silly metaphors, I have lived four and twenty years under the auspices of an adorable sovereign, who supports me with a munificence, more worthy of herself than of me. A sovereign, who when surrounded by the new cares of a throne,

throne, and attacked by all the powers of the universe, not only deigned to think of, but provide for me. A sovereign whom then it became my duty to follow through all the vicissitudes of fortune, and to refuse, as I did, during the most violent rage of the tempest, to enter at any of the doors which were spontaneously thrown open for me in the different courts of Europe. A sovereign, in short, who, at the very time that I blushed at the uselessness of my employment, never ceased conferring benefits on me, and giving public and repeated testimonies of her constant clemency and disposition to serve me.

Tell me now, my dear Marquis, whether the repugnance which I feel to the asking such a Patroness leave to absent myself from her, even for a few months, arises from a romantic delicacy, or from that sense of duty which belongs to an honest man? And can I with propriety ask this permission, when the most august and flourishing Imperial family, which, favoured by heaven, is happily become numerous, begins to be initiated in our language, and in the mysteries of harmony, and to make me daily hope for an opportunity for the exercise of my obedience?

Would it be believed? and yet, amidst all these most solid reasons to the contrary, a voyage to Rome is not only desirable, but my longing to put it in practice rendered more impatient, by the difficulty to gratify it. Hence the present necessity of disobeying your obliging command, *nil mihi rescribas, attamen ipse veni*, does not keep imagination idle; I already enjoy the hospitality which you so generously have prepared for me; I pass with you through all the triumphal streets of my dear Rome: I breathe the venerable air of the Vatican; *et quo non possum corpore, mente feror*. This, my dear Marquis, is at present all I am allowed to enjoy.

Vienna, 1754.

This invitation to Rome, is further explained in the following letter.

L E T T E R XX.

TO THE ABATE PASQUINI.

THE smiling description of your pastoral life, has made me wish to adopt it; particularly when I reflected on the chearful humour it had inspired, so different from that which used to reign in your letters. I congratulate you on the occasion, and hope the apostolic

apostolic ministry will occasion no alteration.

It is most true, that at Naples, Rome, Florence, Milan, and indeed through all Italy, there has been a report, that I intended visiting my native country : and this has circulated during three or four months, without my being able to trace its origin : But, on the contrary, it is most true, that I have no otherwise thought of it, than I have done for these four and twenty years past : that is, always proposing this journey, but never resolving upon it. The fable has gone so far, that the *Servus servorum* has made the Marquis Patrizi write to me on the subject. His Holiness was formerly my master, during my apprenticeship at the Forum ; and I should be very glad to see him again, now he is become master of all the faithful ; but though this is a wish in the catalogue of honest *desiderata*, yet it must not be blindly indulged. I have a million of little impediments, which, united together, become as invincible as the hairs in the tail of the Sertorian horse. I do not, however, relinquish the hope ; and if ever I quit my shell, you will see me at your *Formiano* *. I wish you

* Anthill.

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a more abundant crop from your pulpit, than you gathered from your fields. I thank you for your affectionate remembrance, and assure, you that your generous acknowledgements are far behind my wish to serve you, which greatly surpasses my abilities.

Vienna, August 19, 1754.

LETTER XXI.

To the CAVALIER MONTECUCCOLI, on his sending him a copy of CHELONIDES, a tragedy written by Monsignor SABATINI, Bishop of Modena.

THANKS to you, most obliging Count, for your precious gift of the beautiful *Chelonides*, and for the communication of the secret. I am proud of the keenness of my scent. From the first time that I was permitted to peruse it, I discovered the judgment, knowledge, and solidity, of the author. I gave it a second reading, and found new beauties and new motives for admiration, in the masterly manner with which our unknown tragic writer passes through an unfortunate and ruined country, in which so few have ven-

tured to travel. The truth of the characters, the just succession of ideas, the very natural conduct of the piece, without being common, and above all, the constancy with which learning is always made subservient to reason, not reason to learning, as is usual with those who make amends for weakness of intellect, by strength of memory: All these, without a guide, would have conducted me to the source of such a perfect composition. If the divulging the *secret* is not to be kept a secret, I beg the Envoy will congratulate the most worthy author in my name, and confess to him, that I bless myself that justice has been done to his merits of other kinds; particularly, as it has freed me from the danger of so formidable a rival. I hope soon to confirm, in person, to the Envoy, my respectful sentiments of gratitude, and am, &c.

Vienna, July 28, 1754.

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L E T T E R XXII.

TO A FRIEND AT ROME.

OUR Nuncio being at Vespers, and otherwise busy in the sacred occupations of the day, has communicated to me the letter which you have written to him, and commissioned me to thank you for it in his name. I do this with the more pleasure, knowing the kindness which this worthy prelate has for you, and the readiness with which, in preference to many others, he has appointed you to be his secretary. And as I am very anxious that you should fill this office with satisfaction to him, and profit to yourself, I think it right to advertise you, confidentially, of some few particulars which it may be of importance for you to know, previous to your becoming the secretary of a public minister; which is certainly very different from that of a person in a private station.

It seems necessary that you should always carefully avoid prefaces and introductions to your letters, particularly those of negotiation; but, with an open frankness, should enter di-

rectly on the business; manifesting, even in the first line, that you are a perfect master of the subject, and suppressing whatever may appear superfluous and episodical. But in being as short and laconic as the nature of the business will allow, take care to omit no essential circumstance; and try with the most natural simplicity to give a graceful and pleasing turn to whatever you write. One happy expression is sufficient to enliven a whole letter. And, in your thoughts and language, you should try to rise above the common, without adopting such phrases and modes of expression as are no longer in use. The books used by persons attached to the *Corps diplomatique* should merely furnish your first instructions. You should select and form to yourself something that seems new, without extravagance. Monsignor the Nuncio has a particular affection for men of wit and ingenuity; and I am confident, that you are sufficiently gifted with both, to suit his disposition in an eminent degree, as he has likewise a particular passion for the *belles lettres*.

I shall detain you no longer, and flatter myself, that you will receive these hints from one, who having long resided in this distant country,

try, has had an opportunity of making such observations on the ministry, as may intitle him to pardon from a friend like you, for the liberty he now takes.

This letter seems to have been addressed to the Abate *Taruffi*, on his being appointed by the poet's recommendation, *auditor and secretary of legation* to Monsignor Visconti, the Pope's legate at the Imperial court. The Abate was Metastasio's countryman, and early acquaintance. Their friendship continued uninterrupted till the poet's decease; after which, he pronounced his Eloge at a general meeting of the academy *degli arcadi* at Rome, in August, 1782.

At the beginning of this year, Metastasio received an application from Prince *Hilberghausen*, for a copy of his *Ifola disabitata*, written for the court of Spain; which not arriving so soon as was expected, produced a letter from the Prince, to which the following is the answer.

L E T-

L E T T E R XXIII.

TO PRINCE HILBERGHAUSEN.

My *Ifola difabitata* (desert Island) did not merit the eagerness which your serene highness manifested, to be in possession of it ; nor did my disobedience deserve reproof. The first did me too much honour, and the second too much wrong. My whimsical little poem would have been long since at Schoffendorff, if I could have depended on any other poetical amanuensis at Vienna than our—Or if he had not been previously obliged to furnish a copy of the same composition to my most august Patroness, who for what reason I know not, eagerly requested one. At length, I have procured a copy for your highness, which I have now the honour to send, accompanied with my most humble acknowledgements for the many favours which I have received in your enchanted palace ; from the charms of which, however, as well as from the bad weather, my own impatience, and the solicitations of the company, I should wish to be disenchanted. Recommending

mending my little drama and myself to the benevolence of your serene highness, and your illustrious guests, I have the honour to be with the most profound respect and reverence, &c.

LETTER XXIV.

TO THE SAME.

ALL the princes of your serene highness's rank, may form themselves upon your model, for politeness, and all unfortunate poets, on mine, for disgrace. What can be imagined more gracious, generous, and obliging, than the invitation to partake of your royal delights, with which you deigned to honour me? And what more disastrous, than my inability to enjoy them? The arrival of the bad weather, and the rehearsals in the respectable, but cold theatre of Schonbrunn, have augmented my usual complaints, with a most solemn Catarrh, embellished with its cough, chillness, and febrile companions; so that the merely transporting myself from one house to another, is become an heroic enterprise; and nothing less than the friendly violence and powerful influence of Count Canale can induce me to undertake it. I shall

shall return my most humble thanks in person, as soon as possible ; and in the mean time, shall not torture my brain in excusing myself: as whoever loses what I lose, rather merits compassion than pardon. I have the honour to be with the most profound respect, &c.

END OF THE SECOND SECTION.

SECTION III.

WE shall now return to the bard's correspondence with his friend the CAVALIER FARINELLI..

LETTER I.

SOME weeks having elapsed since I had finished and transcribed *Alessandro* for your court; of which, as I had given notice to Count Azlor, I did not think it necessary to forward it by the first post, as you did not hurry me; but having been informed yesterday, that a courier was expected to set off every moment, I hasten to prepare my letter and packet. In the first place, you will find the opera of *Alessandro nell' Indie* shorter than it was before, by three hundred and sixty-one verses, and nine airs; but encreased in action, interest and spirit; particularly in the third act, which is entirely new moulded. What this cursed business has been, can only be comprehended by the genius and experience

ence of my dear Gemello, and by some one who has had the misfortune to write operas ; but not by all. I thank you, however, for having forced me to improve a drama, which though not devoid of fire and poetry, languished in the third act; but which, without the stimulus of pleasing you, I should never have thought worth the trouble I have taken with it. If ever there should be a decent edition of my operas, I now hope, that it will disgrace me less than in its former dress.

You will, moreover, find on a slip of paper, all the entrances, exits, stage business, and situations of the several characters, as I arranged them on my table in writing the opera. And this trouble is extremely useful for the performance of some dramas, particularly *Alessandro*. If no embarrassment happens, you need not look at this paper ; but if intricacy occurs, it will save you the trouble of thinking.

If Sig. *Quaglia*, an architect of great experience in this theatre of Vienna, and my friend, shall have had time to favour me with them, you will find in the same parcel, three sketches, rather than designs, of those long scenes in which the situations are difficult to delineate. I begged this favour of

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him, not with the least design of limiting or restraining your ideas, or those of your able subaltern ; but because I hoped, by this means, better to explain what would be wanting in the respective scenes, that the action may be clear, decorous, and apparent. The last scene of the third act, for example, would entirely languish, if the architect did not contrive a decorous and probable skreen on the right hand side, near the orchestra, to conceal *Porus* and *Gandarte* from all the other actors, and yet leave them visible to the spectators. I have imagined for this purpose, the temple to be wholly adorned with very rich carpets, hanging from the architraves, pilastres, and columns : and that one of these carpets, separating *Porus* and *Gandarte* from the other performers, shall leave them visible to the spectators. So that these designs may serve to vindicate my wish, but not to furnish ideas or inventions for the scene.

If, however, as I begin to fear, these sketches are not ready for the packet, they shall be sent after it, as soon as Sig. Quaglia shall favour me with them. My eagerness will, I hope, be excused, as I flatter myself, that my dear Gemello has no occasion
for

for new proofs of my sincere desire to be useful to him.

I am threatened with a new opera for our court. The worst of it is, that there is no proper preparation for it. The making a dress without knowing who is to wear it, is the business of a Jew: I do not know, nor ought I absolutely to make it. We have no singers in the service of the court, no one at least upon whom we can venture to found a character. And those which can be had from other countries, however ordinary their talents, ought to be engaged some years before they are wanted. Hence it becomes necessary to have the foresight of my dear Gemello, who does not postpone making his cloak, till it begins to rain. Such care of the future, is not a drug of this country. So that there will be no opera, or it will be got up in haste, and for such performers as have been rejected by other theatres: and then, either it will be impossible to write a new opera, or it must be done in such haste, as, among us poor mortals, precludes all good: *fiat lux, et facta est*, is only reserved for omnipotence.

By a letter from Sig. Ridolfi of the end of December, I learn that your health

had suffered considerably at your return to the Escorial, and that it was not yet quite re-established. This afflicted me, as every thing you suffer ought to afflict me. But my dear Gemello, forgive my affection the liberty of saying, that according to the accounts I have received, you have been a little to blame for this indisposition. They tell me, that your zeal and impatience, when you wish to serve your sovereigns in proportion to the favours which you have received from them, make you forget yourself, and that you have no rest, either in mind or body, day or night. This character is worthy of you ; but it would likewise be worthy of you to reflect, that if you destroy yourself, you can no longer serve them. And that your first duty is to preserve for such Patrons, a servant whose loss would not only be sensibly felt, but irreparable.

My own health is what it has long been: full of flatulencies, acidities, tension of every honest nerve, and profound hypochondria; but with a countenance which rather merits envy than compassion. Patience is the best specific which I have yet found; I lay in a good stock of it, and yet it often fails me:

but

but that sincere and constant affection which makes me always yours, will never fail me.

Vienna, February 4, 1754:

L E T T E R II.

TO THE SAME.

THE patience of Sig. Azlor, in waiting for an occasion to dispatch a courier in order to forward *Alessandro* to you, is truly heroic. But mine is not quite so sublime. It is too great a trial for it, after having used every effort possible to oblige a friend, to have the design frustrated by negligence. I therefore send you my *Alessandro nell' Indie* by the post; circumcised, and trimmed to your taste, and my own—What will be the consequence of my impatience? My verses are not affairs of state; and though the curiosity of others may have some pleasure in perusing them, they will neither be rendered better nor worse by this hurry. To wait for a courier during solicitude, would be prudent; but waiting with tranquillity while my diligence is rendered useless, and your wishes remain ungratified, is paying too great respect to œconomy. My impatience may perhaps

arise from poetical vivacity; but between us twins, there should be a reciprocation of indulgence, and I have no doubt but I shall be forgiven. My friend *Sig. Quaglia*, who promised me designs, has not yet brought them, and I shall not wait for them. I told you in a former letter, that I did not depend on him for the ideas, which either you or your assistants may want: it is sufficient that I have pointed out to you the places where I imagined, while I was writing, the principal business and situations that might be assisted by scenery. These clearly known, it will remain with you to avail yourself of my expedients, or those of others, at your pleasure. As soon as this good man, who is really hurried to the last degree, by the two theatres here, and by a thousand whims of the court, shall be able to oblige me, you shall have his sketches, and make what use of them you please.

I am extremely anxious to receive some news of your health: particularly, as the last I received from *Sig. Ridolfi* was by no means what my tender affection wished. Take care of yourself, my dear friend, for your own sake, for mine, and for the admiration of all good men. Examples of moderation,

in circumstances such as yours, are so rare, that your preservation becomes a common concern. Adieu. Command me, and never be weary of loving me.

Vienna, February 23, 1754.

I. E T T E R III.

TO THE SAME.

You complain, my dear Gemello, of not hearing from me, and yet to three letters that I have written to you, I have received but one answer. Your silence occasioned mine, after the account of your indisposition from Sig. Ridolfi, and the supposition, that you were very busy in preparing for your festal solemnity ; so that instead of accusing me, you should thank me for my discretion.

I became a stone, but not a precious one, when I saw the magnificent present of an enamelled watch, and a pocket-book so richly and elegantly bound, come from the Imperial custom-house. What can I say to you, who are so much more abundant in gifts than I in words ? The thing speaks for itself, and I, in order to manifest my gratitude, will endeavour to make the world

do justice to the munificence of that hand, which is never tired of dispensing favours.

You are truly a Sea monster. What ! can the Goddess of Manzanare condescend even to remember such a being as me ; and to recommend to you the task of advising me *to make use of the pocket-book in writing down my thoughts for the opera which you have so long requested from me ?* And you, like a true friend, have not instantly taken my part ? Did not you describe, as I have to you a thousand times, the irregular state of my health ? as an indubitable proof of this truth, did you not say that my most august Patroness, in order to spare my poor tormented head any new labour, had consented to let the old opera of *Tito* be brought out last year ! and have you suffered me to appear either guilty of laziness or ingratitude ? And this you call friendship ? Twinship ? Christian charity ? And yet I am not to call you a Marine monster ? But I will vindicate myself, if I die for it. Freed as I am at present from arranging any little compositions for my Patroness, I shall neither let soul nor body rest, till I have chosen a subject for this blessed opera, which like a true Swiss, you are absolutely determined to wrest from my hands ;

hands; and if it should favour of the flatulencies, torments, tension of nerves, and of all the other agreeable qualities of the hypochondriac writer, it will be your own fault. I am, however, still able to draw up a manifesto in verse, to set it to music, and publish it in all the newspapers of the four quarters of the world. You laugh? but there is no cause for laughter. An angry poet is even more to be feared, than a Sea monster. Pray for my health and favour with the muses; and that after so many years of matrimony, they would have the same complacency for me, as when they first courted my acquaintance.

The contusion in your leg puts me in a passion. Pray favour it, my dear Gemello. I know you well. Your zeal to serve others, makes you neglect yourself; and I fear that you do not take that care of it which you ought. Remember that a useful and grateful servant merits preservation; and that you fulfil the most considerable of your duties, in endeavouring to be long useful to your beneficent sovereigns.

What did you expect from *Mingotti*? Do you begin only now to know the grotesque character of our tragi-comic Sirens? I wonder

more at your wonder, than at her conduct. She has done what she ought to do, *secundum ordinam* of fingers: and you flattered yourself with that hope which it was unreasonable for you to form, if you expected her to be prudent. Give her your holy benediction, and let her run after repentance (*m*).

You who have had long experience, and are present, can best tell whether it will be expedient to chuse the *Eroe Cinese* for next September. The whole opera depends on the part of *Leanze*; hence, whoever represents it, should not have his hands in his pockets. I am unable to prescribe any cure for its brevity, as you have no dancers; but I shall rely on the resources of my twin. I have read the piece by the Abate *Antonio della Mirandola*, and find it very happily verified: I thank you for thinking of sending it to me.

I wish your Italian Emissary, *Marchesini*, good sport; but according to the accounts which I have received, there is not much

(*m*) It was to come to England, that this excellent performer quitted Spain sooner than Farinelli wished. Her first appearance on our stage was in the opera of *Ipermestra*, written by Metastasio, and set by Haffé, in the Autumn of 1754.

choice.

choice. The *Mattei* has lately performed at Reggio : but from the advices sent hither, not with her usual success. Beauties have their day, and applause does not make them better. Whether she has advanced or retreated since I heard her, I am unable to say. I entreat you to thank *Monfignor Migazzi*, and the Duke *di Santa Elizabetta*, in my name, for the honour of their remembrance, and to assure them of my constant respect. Oh that I could make a fourth with you ! But these are *pia desideria*.

Adieu, my dear Swiss Twin, my Sea monster !

Vienna, June 8, 1754.

LETTER IV.

TO THE SAME.

I RECEIVED your very dear letter, which found me engaged with the muses, in compliance with your wishes, notwithstanding all the infernal regions seem to have conspired in disturbing me. I have a whole volume of instructions to draw up for the printer of a new edition of my works at Paris. I ought to new write a whole opera:
to

to accommodate three festive dramas for *Schloss troff*, whither the court goes at its return from Bohemia: to write and make additions to songs and choruses for the same occasion: to furnish an idea, in writing, for a German comedy to be represented before their majesties in the military college of *Neustadt*; and, moreover, have been obliged to invent and draw out at full length, the idea of a magnificent picture, which my most august mistress has ordered to be painted for the ceiling of the great hall of this university, that is now building at her expence. What does my dear Sea monster say to all this (n)? Do you think I am furnished with a sufficient dose of business? Have patience. With all this, I have advanced a good way in the first act, and am not dissatisfied with what I have hitherto been able to write. If

(n) The appellations of *Gemello*, *Mostro Marino*, and *Svizzero*, bestowed by Metastasio on his friend Farinelli, in pleasantry, may want explanation. Why he called him *Twin* (*Gemello*) has already been explained. *Sea monster*, *Mostro Marino*, doubtless alluded to his birth on the Seashore at Naples, and his voice and professional abilities exceeding the common limits of humanity. And lastly, by *Svizzero* (*Swiss*) added to *Twin*, Metastasio meant to compare Farinelli and himself to Swiss troops, who quit their own country to enter into foreign service.

affection

affection can do any thing, you will likewise be contented. It is impossible to lengthen my letter. If you will have me work, you must allow me to be quiet; and if health does not fail me, I shall certainly get on.

I should write a separate letter to Sig. Ridolfi, but I hope, that at your intercession, he will generously remit the formality of two covers, and receive these thanks and salutations with the same cordiality as if they were conveyed in a different letter. I therefore thank, reverence, and embrace him always: wishing for the faculty of being useful to him. Do you my dear and admirable Swifts, love me, bear with my infirmities, command, and believe me, &c.

Vienna, August 17, 1754.

L E T T E R . V.

TO THE SAME.

My sincere eagerness to comply with the wishes of my most amiable Swifts, has made me work with such a good will, that yesterday I finished the second act of the promised opera: and if my dear Sea monster wishes for grandeur of exhibition, and energy of
tendernefs,

tendernefs, I have reason to hope that he will find himfelf rewarded for the patience which my abominable impediments have obliged him to exercife, in bearing with my involuntary delays. At prefent, I muft confeß, that I find myfelf in want of refofe. I have written two aëts without taking breath, and without reft, the third would fuffer.

It now happens, that the prince of *Hilberghaufen*, who expects their Imperial majefties on a vifit at *Schoßtroff*, his country feat, the 23d inftant, thinks he fhall want me to fay grace to the magnificent entertainments preparing on this occafion, and folicits me with the obftinacy of a Swifs, to be of the party. Indeed the fervice of my fovereigns is in queftion, though indirectly, as well as the pleafing a prince to whom I am indebted for a thoufand diftinëtions : fo that as I fhall at the fame time enjoy the neceffary reft from my poetical labours, I have refolved to pay my duty to my patrons, and the prince, in the country next Tuefday, and afterwards to make a vifit to the Countefs of *Althan* in Moravia ; whom I did not follow this year, that I might devote myfelf wholly to your fervice ; and at my return, refofed and re-

fitted,

fited, give to our opera the termination and last polish. So that I may say, that my dear Gemello is already obeyed; as what remains of the labour, is already included in what is done, like the chicken in the egg, which only wants to be fate upon.

I know not whether you have ever heard of a Neapolitan composer called *Cocchi*: I have seen an opera set by him, my *Semiramide*, which pleased me much. Pray take notice, that though I recommend him, he neither knows me, nor I him, and no one has spoken to me in his favour; but I was so struck with the brevity, fire, expression, and judgment, manifested in his *Semiramis*, that I should not wish for better music to my new opera. I repeat it, that I have not the least view in praising him; and only speak with that candid abundance of heart, which I naturally use to all, but particularly to my dear Gemello.

What I beg of you most earnestly is, to insist in the most peremptory manner, that whoever has the opera to set, shall keep it a great secret, and on no account suffer a copy to be taken. The hungry printers, greedy of the smallest gain, are always on the watch in Italy; and you may perhaps have the
amuse-

amusement of seeing it in print, before it is performed. I have sometimes suffered through the fault of my patrons themselves, who having had copies of some of my pieces for perusal previous to performance, and from partiality to the author, suffering them to be read by others, without knowing how, they have got into print before the proper time. As I shall not speak of this new composition at court, to avoid all risk, and shall be particularly careful on my side, I hope you will be so on yours. Perhaps you will tell me, that the inconvenience would not be great, as the opera will always be new when it is represented, and must be known to have been written expressly for you; yet this manner of reasoning does not satisfy my delicacy.

And now, my dear Swift, adieu. The muses have kept me a prisoner in my den; and, at present, propriety requires that I should see some particular persons, previous to my leaving the city. I shall therefore dispatch a list of visits, and away.

Frain, Sept. 7, 1754.

A letter written about this time to Sig. *Francesco Ridolfi* at Madrid, who seems to have

have been Farinelli's friend and assistant in the opera regency at the court of Spain, would hardly be worth translating, but for the intelligence it contains relative to musical transactions. The slightest letters of Metastasio, in the original, have an elegance of diction, and felicity of expression, that incline me to think them of more importance, than I am able to prove in my own language.

LETTER VI.

TO SIG. F. RIDOLFI.

I RECEIVE your most obliging letter in the forests of Moravia, where I intend to spend the remainder of the autumn in the company of the Countess d'Althan, the general her son, and many noble guests of both sexes; and where I hope for a little respite from those diabolical hypochondriac complaints which so much afflict me. Your most welcome letter found me struggling with a catarrh and feverette, for which I receive compliments, as a salutary thing ; but I am more inclined to grumble and be ungrateful,

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than

than to thank my friends for their felicitations. To-day it has not visited me, and I begin to hope that it has taken leave. I am extremely afflicted at the persecutions which my dear Gemello suffers in his stomach: embrace him tenderly, in my name, I entreat you; and assure him, that I feel all his sufferings in my soul, aggravated by the anxiety incident to a long and sincere friendship, which has too much time to torment itself in the intervals between letter and letter, at such an enormous distance.

I rejoice that he has at length received the designs for *Alessandro*. Pray remind him, that these are not meant to cramp the invention of his own architects; but merely to explain the situations, and to leave the invention of scenes to their pleasure.

In the first week of next month, I shall return to Vienna in order to intrench myself against the cold of winter, and to put the last hand to the opera which I have promised my Swiss Twin; who has had the art of forcing me, in spite of all my complaints, to break my firm resolution not to tease the Muses. But who can resist a dear sea monster, disguised like a Swiss.

I am unacquainted with the merit of the
Parigi,

Parigi, but I hear a very good account both of her figure, and abilities. The *Ghiringhella*, who has been much approved here in men's parts, is a graceful young person, with whom I hope you will be pleased.

I entreat you, once more, to embrace my dear Gemello affectionately, and believe me to be with the most perfect esteem and friendship.

Frain in Moravia, Sept. 27, 1754.

The first letter of the year 1755, which seems to have been preserved, is addressed,

L E T T E R VII.

TO THE ABATE PASQUINI.

YOUR letter of the 20th of last month, which I received yesterday evening, has been a painful companion to me all night, and is still obstinately fixed in my mind. The dreadful danger of losing the most excellent organ of the soul, puts you in so pitable a state, that it drives every idea from my mind, which I ought to recollect for your consolation

tion. My dear Pasquini! what can I possibly suggest to you? You know as well as any one, all the assistance that reason and rhetoric can administer in similar cases; and it would be a tiresome piece of pedantry, to attempt ringing them in your ears. Religion and philosophy are the most useful companions, during such tempests: hope firmly, or heroically relinquish that remedy: there is no drug more poisonous than feeble hope. It is indisputable, that our burthens are rendered more light, or more heavy, in proportion to its fervor. An enormous weight does not oppress us, if well placed on the shoulders, though an inconsiderable one becomes insupportable, if awkwardly carried. I console myself in my miseries, which though not to be compared with yours, are considerable, by reflecting, that I am not always to be confined to this troublesome and dirty Inn; that there is an infinite number of mortals more wretched than myself: and that providence puts our misfortunes on a level, by our virtue. Be assured, my dear friend, that you will either soon see the first diminished, or feel the second encreased. If you can possibly conceive how much I suffer in being able to afford you no better consolation

than

than words, you will return me part of that compassion which is so justly due to your situation from my friendship. Adieu, my dear friend. Let me soon rejoice in your recovery, or admire your fortitude—at least, spare me, if possible, the painful office of pitying you.

Vienna, Feb. 3, 1755.

LETTER VIII.

TO SIG. FILIPPONI.

THANKS, my dear friend, for the acquisition of the most worthy count *Alessandro Bogino's* partiality, which your kindness has procured me. The picture which you have drawn of him, no less than his sonnets, tell me how much you must be delighted with this uncommon assemblage of so many enviable qualities. Assure him of my devout acknowledgments; offer him my sincere services; tell him, that from the gay flowers which his happy genius has already produced, I judge of the excellence of the fruit which will follow; and tell him not to suffer the smallest weed or error to take root in so noble

ble a foil, unless it be that which seduces him to honour me with his friendship.

La Corona is a composition, which, in fortune, has far exceeded my hopes. It is not for my interest to examine the merit of it; and if it should be still of less value than it seems, I ought, at least, to be grateful for the discovery of so considerable a number of friends.

Adieu. Salute, in my name, the venerable Priestless; embrace the whole sacred and profane most flourishing family; love me, take care of yourself, and believe me to be, &c.

In his correspondence with his Roman friend, Argenvilliers, this year, Metastasio was provoked to attempt a long period in Spanish, in answer to one that he had received from that Gentleman. At the end of his labour he exclaims;

L E T T E R IX.

OH what a terrible fatigue! I am in a violent perspiration from head to foot. I
hope

hope you will never attempt to put me to such another trial. I have never written or spoken Spanish: and the chief part of the many books that I have read, have been poets; so that my prose must be much infected by the fantasticalness of Parnassus. But I shall say no more, as my risk with such a friend as you, is not very great. For if my rhetoric should make you laugh, I am certain that you will have the charity to laugh alone.

I hope you will neither rejoice nor grieve much, concerning the choice of dramas for this theatre. The singers of the present times wholly forget, that their business is to imitate the speech of men, with numbers and harmony: on the contrary, they believe themselves more perfect, in proportion as their performance is remote from human nature. Their models are Nightingales, Flageolets, Crickets, and Grasshoppers; not the personages they represent, or their affections. When they have played their Symphony with the throat, they believe they have fulfilled all the duties of their art. Hence the audience keep their hearts in the most perfect tranquillity, and expect the performers merely to tickle their ears.

For this purpose, there is no occasion for good dramas ; on the contrary, I should wish that, not only words were banished from our theatres, but the whole alphabet, except a pair of vowels (*o*).

Vienna, y Agosto a 28, di 1755.

L E T T E R X.

TO THE SAME.

I AM obliged to tease you to day, my dear friend, from necessity. But among your other virtues, as you are possessed of a large portion of patience, there is perhaps no harm in my putting you in the way how to make use of it. Having a small capital at Naples of 900 Ducati, and there being at Rome a

(*o*) If Metastasio were now living, he might have said, “ except a *single* vowel,” In his time, divisions were frequently given to the vowel O ; but at present, Italian composers assign them only to A ; on which more labour is bestowed by the Maestro, and attention by the audience, than on all the poetry and sentiments of the singers. If, forty years ago, Metastasio speaks with so much indignation of the abuse of execution, which has been increasing ever since, what would he say now?

small

small sum unoccupied in your hands, as a good father of a family, it seems my duty not to let this money be idle. In Rome it will produce little more than three per cent, and here it is easy to get five: so that I have determined on the most profitable bargain. I hope, my dear friend, that you will approve my resolution, and excuse, with your usual partiality, this new trouble. Such inconveniences, are unavoidable taxes on those excellent qualities of heart and mind, with which you are endowed. Adieu.

Vienna, September 8, 1755.

L E T T E R XI.

TO THE SAME.

HURRIED away by the torrent of letters, which have been accumulated, during three weeks absence in the country, I must answer in the greatest haste your two admirable letters of the 13th and 27th of last month, which are this moment arrived together.

If my Spanish letter does not abound with grammatical errors, I shall be very proud, and am obliged to you for discovering in me a faculty of which I was ignorant. Find out
some

some other, I beseech you: as you have so excellent a knack at investigation.

The rest of Metastasio's letters to this correspondent during 1755, having been written merely on subjects of business, offer nothing but what may have flowed from an inferior pen. We shall therefore resume his more interesting, and constant correspondence, with his friend, the Cavalier CARLO BROSCHI, better known by the name of FARNELLI,

L E T T E R XII.

I NEVER, my most dear Gemello, wanted the assistance of a true friend like you, so much as at this moment: and you, without knowing my distress, have bestowed that assistance in your last most affectionate letter, by your kind expressions with which I console myself, in imagining that I shall not remain in a desert after the unexpected, afflicting, and eternal loss, which we have sustained of our most worthy Countess d'Althan! A Rheumatic inflammatory fever, cancelled her from the number of the living, in six days, at 11 o'clock at night, on the
first

first of this month. She died as she lived, that is, heroically fulfilling, with serene fortitude, all the offices of a christian and a mother. There is no one that does not feel her loss most sensibly, and admire and extol her virtue, from our august Sovereigns, to the lowest order of the people: circumstances, my dear friend, which in some degree afford me consolation; but do not restore Her! A friendship of more than four and twenty years, free from remorse, are ties which cannot be broken without a cruel shock. You are involved in this calamity, for you have lost a good and true friend.

I am obliged to you for the reception which Sig. *Bonichi* has obtained from you on my account, and am proud of the obliging zeal which the Archbishop, *Monsignor Migazzi*, has manifested in favour of our poet. He is a man of genius and knows the world. This last quality inclined me to recommend him to you, even more than his rank in Parnassus. And now he has been the means of proving the extent of your kindness for me, I love him better than ever.

Thirty-five days have elapsed since the departure of my packet, so that I now suppose my new opera is in your hands. I per-

ceive that it was not arrived when your last letter was written, and hope that no accident or indisposition of the most obliging bearer, has occasioned its travelling so slow. The weather has been so horrible, that it is natural to throw all the blame upon that. If he should have reached Madrid when this arrives, I beg you to present my respects, and to assure him of my perfect esteem and gratitude.

Pray endeavour, by every means possible, to persuade our most venerable prelate, *Migazzi*, to continue his generous partiality for me, of which I am so jealous and so proud. Reverence him devoutly in my name, and procure me a little of his affection. Adieu, dear Gemello : take care of yourself, if you wish well to your, &c.

Vienna, March 12, 1755.

L E T T E R XIII.

TO THE SAME.

I BEGAN to fear that my *Nitteti* was ashamed to appear at the court of Madrid, and that retreating into some hermitage on the way, she had resolved to pass a solitary life.

life. I quitted Vienna the 20th instant, without knowing what was become of her. You see plainly, that after a suspense of five months, I had reason to be uneasy. Thank Heaven, she has at length found the road; and now enjoys, near you, the convenient and delicious abode, which as a fond father, I had foreseen would be granted to her, for your sake; whose kindness was likely to supply the defects of such merit as she had been able to draw from the exhausted treasury of her fire.

Regard her as a little niece of a good disposition, and shew her off to such advantage, that she may at least *seem* beautiful. The clemency with which she has been received by your benignant sovereigns, comforts, but does not surprise, me. This is not the first time that my fortunate productions have experienced their goodness. They have been long accustomed to the most illustrious premiums, merely for my obedience, which has generally been preceded by benefits.

I am very much obliged to you for your affectionate condolence, and the consolation which you have endeavoured to administer for the irreparable loss which we have both sustained, of a worthy and perfect friend ;
but

but I must confess, that my mind has not yet recovered its former tranquillity. Nor to accomplish this, my dear Gemello, do I know whether I should become more wise or more foolish. But I am certain, that I must be very different from what I am at present. What I am unable to do for myself, time and necessity, the harsh, but certain masters of our miserable feelings, will do for me.

For heaven's sake, give me a better account of your own health. It seems as if your headaches, and relaxed stomach, had a secret correspondence with my obstinate and most uncivil nervous affections: and if I could once hear of your good health, I should have great hopes of mine. Like true Twins, we sufficiently resemble each other in our sufferings; it is time we should begin to be similar in happiness.

Say a thousand respectful and affectionate things for me to our most worthy *Monsignor Migazzi*. Why, alas! am not I allowed sometimes to make a third in your confabulations! Be assured, however, that I very frequently enjoy that happiness, mentally.

I long for the arrival of Count Torrepalma, and shall avail myself of the prejudices
in

in my favour with which you have possessed him. Adieu, my dear Gemello, I am and ever shall be, &c.

Vienna, May 24, 1755.

With his opera of *Nitteti*, Metastasio sent the following Sonnet.

Al Cavaliere

D. CARLO BROSCHI

FARINELLI.

L'Autore di Nitteti.

SONETTO.

*Questa nata pur or quì presso al polo
Mia prole, ch'io consacro al foglio Ibero,
Raccogli, o CARLO, ed a prostrarfi al suolo
Le insegna, ospite, amico, a condottiero.*

*Pensa, che il suo destin fido a te solo,
Che sei dell'opra eccitator primiero;
E che appreser gemelli a sciorre il volo,
La tua voce in Parnaso e il mio pensiero.*

*Pensa, che quando Te l'Italia ostenta
Per onor dell'Armonica famiglia,
L'orno de' Carmi un tuo dover diventa :*

*E se questo dover non ti consiglia,
Grato l'amor del padre al men rammenta;
E del padre l'amor rendi alla figlia.*

Sonnet

Sonnet to FARINELLI.

Addressed to him from Vienna, with the opera of *Nitteti*, written at his request, and to be performed under his direction, at the court of Madrid.

My offspring destin'd for the Iberian shore
Protect, Oh Charles ! though foster'd near the pole ;
Teach her, when prostrate, favour to implore
With all the ardor of thy friendly soul.

Remember that on Thee she calls for aid,
Whose kind suggestions drew her into light,
And that my Muse and thy sweet voice essay'd
Like Twins, in youth, to scale Parnassus' height.

When o'er her tuneful sons of high renown,
Italia gave the sov'reignty to thee,
It then became the duty of thy crown
To aid the sister art of Poesy.

But if this duty no such counsel give,
Thy bosom let an old affection fire ;
And let the helpless child that love receive,
Which has so long been lavished on her Sire.

L E T T E R XIV.

TO THE SAME.

OH how numerous, and how different, are
the sensations, my dear Gemello, which
I your

your letter of the 10th of September has excited! Love, tenderness, confusion, gratitude, terror, wonder, and a thousand others which are felt, but cannot be described. I have experienced at the bottom of my soul, the most violent affliction for the destruction of the unhappy Lisbon. What horror! What a scourge! What misery! Poor humanity!—Yet among all these motives of terror and sorrow, the ample field which providence has opened to your benevolent sovereign, for exercising the great and admirable qualities of his heart, affords me some consolation. What he has done, and is still doing, on this dreadful occasion, would appear nothing but poetical inventions, if ascribed to my *Titus* or *Alexander*. These are actions, my dear Gemello, which do honour to human nature. Happy the mortal destined by Heaven, to be the instrument of such glory to all our species.

And among such tragical events, have your admirable sovereigns deigned to lend an ear to the humble sentiments of my grateful submission? Oh matchless clemency; unexampled benignity! and has my discretion been commended for being satisfied with their profuse beneficence! Ah, my dear

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Gemello,

Gemello, if mine has been discretion, I defy your great monarchs, with all their power, to find an indiscreet person among mortals.

I venerate the just resolution of your pious sovereign, to suspend the celebration of the intended festival. The thought is well worthy of the mind which produced it. When heaven shall be appeased, and mental tranquillity restored, give what directions you please for the decorations of the new drama. It cannot be in hands more friendly, or more expert, than your own.

Whether Egypt appears in a car, or on an elephant, I know that you will be attentive to his dignity; and careful that the representation shall be furnished with all the barbarous pomp with which my head was filled, while this drama was writing.

Before I finish, let me make a confession to you. I have been a long while liberal of snuff at your expence. All the dilettanti nobility, pay their court to me on your account, and my snuff has usurped your name. Many have sent commissions to Madrid, for some of the same kind, but none have succeeded. Stimulated, not only by my indiscreet nose, but by vanity, I was on the point of begging your charity, before I was quite
 3 a bank-

a bankrupt, when your last magnificent and elegant present arrived. This oppressed me to such a degree, that I lost all courage to torment you again, as it appeared to me, an unpardonable insatiability to have any want remaining, after such excessive remuneration. During this time, the Marquis Paul came to visit me, in order to express his infinite gratitude, for the favours which you have conferred on his brother. I proudly displayed to him the present I had received, and historically related my distress, in being unable to muster sufficient courage to apply to you for ammunition for my nose, and the noses of others. He then only laughed; but, when I met him a few days after, he confessed to me, that he had written my whole melancholy story to his brother. I blushed at this information, and scolded; but to own the truth, (as twins should always do to each other) when the first transport of my wrath was over, I did not feel much injured. Your royal Patrons call me discreet. Ah, for charity's sake, my dear Gemello, let me enjoy their good opinion, and conceal this trait in the history of my life.

Adieu. It is late. Love me as usual,

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and be assured of the perfect and inviolable sympathy of your most faithful Gemello.

Vienna, December 5, 1755.

LETTER XV.

TO MONSIGNOR SABATINI, BISHOP OF
MODENA.

THE most learned, though partial judgment, which you have pronounced, most illustrious and reverend Sir, on my fortunate little verses, and which has been exactly communicated to me by our dear cavalier *Montecuccoli*, demands my warmest gratitude. This opinion, which has more weight than that of a whole public, can never have been given with a view to excite and foment my vanity, by one destined and formed by providence to correct the frailties of others. Your reverence must therefore have imagined me gifted with a modesty, and moderation, sufficient to resist a shock which would have annihilated all the fanatical stoicism of the proud family of Zeno. I confess myself flattered by the credit which you have given me on this occasion; and
hope

hope to enjoy it without the remorse of undeceiving you. I can never, without the greatest ingratitude, forget, not only the generous friendship, but paternal affection, with which your reverence has designed to honour me. I am that

—*Strabonem*

*Appellat pærum pater, et pullum, male parvus
Si cui filius est.*

HOR. SAT. LIB. I. 3. 44.

Nor should we to their faults be more severe,
Than an indulgent father to his heir,
If with distorted eyes the urchin glares,
"Oh, the dear boy, how prettily he stares!"
Is he of dwarfish and abortive size?
"Sweet little moppet," the fond father cries.

FRANCIS.

So that I do not estimate my poetical merit by your favourable judgment, but by your affection, which cannot be a mediator in degrading your equal: an honour, of which I am more ambitious, than of the laurels of Homer. Among all the favours which you heap upon me, I beg your Lordship to grant me this, of regarding you as a brother poet, without diminishing the just veneration due to your other superior qualities. The learning and method with which your Lordship has analysed my Epigram,

has not surprised me. It is done as I ought to have expected it would be, by one who unites the theory of a master, with the practice of a workman. The novelty and vivacity of your thoughts and style have delighted me, as emanations of a mind fraught with all that solid information, and original genius, which have so long excited the respect and veneration of, &c.

Vienna, January 11, 1756,

In writing to his friend, Sig. Argenvilliers, at Rome, the beginning of this year, he says:

“I am very curious to know what reception the music of our GLUCK will meet with at Rome. He composes with peculiar spirit: and according to the present taste, which is said to reign in that city, I should imagine that he would give satisfaction.” April the 5th, he says:

“We have still here as deep a snow, and as cold a North wind, as we have been afflicted with during the whole winter; so that little hope remains of our enjoying spring this year: a season which very often gives way in this climate to its companions. Do you, my dear friend, enjoy in my stead,
the

the smiling days of your warm sky, while I remain suffocated by the stoves of this country."

In another letter, which seems an answer to one which gave an account of the extraordinary success of his dramas at Rome, he says: "The partiality of my native city for my productions, is a very equivocal proof of their merit. The being insensible to the defects of our children, is a weakness so much the more pardonable, as it is common to all mothers: so that if her blind approbation cannot serve as a foundation to my vanity, it merits, at least, that filial tenderness which I sincerely feel for her."

The explanation of a passage in one of his letters to his Roman correspondent which had alarmed him concerning a young man whom he had recommended to the notice of our poet, is pleasant.

Your letter of the 6th of June, made me laugh at the unexpected agitation into which you were thrown on account of Sig. *Niccolino Pavese*. He had been to visit me four or five times; and, notwithstanding I had entreated him to favour me with his commands, I never was able to get a word from him, by which I could discover his wants.

So that concluding there was nothing in which I could serve him, I made use, in writing to you, of the following expression ; *his wants must be impalpable*, that is, cannot be felt, have no existence. Indeed it appears to me, that the young man has judgment, talents, and, according to his account, that he has acquired by his residence in Vienna, all the useful knowledge which an experienced and wise merchant would wish to possess. Therefore make yourself easy, my dear friend ; and since you have patience to correspond with a poet, try to familiarize yourself a little with the language of Parnassus. Never fear my exceeding your instructions, in the credit I give to persons whom you recommend. I understand you perfectly, know the limits which you wish to be observed, and shall never exceed them.

Command me with more freedom, and do not let me have the mortification of always recognizing in your orders themselves, a certain apprehension of incommoding me, which seems a tacit censure of the manner with which I have abused your active friendship.

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L E T T E R X V I.

TO THE ABATE PASQUINI.

I TAKE time, my dear Pasquini, in answering your letter of last February, because, the business it contains, will not be injured by delay; and because my negligence will be treated with more indulgence, by such a man as you, than by a thousand others, who exact with more rigour the performance of every duty, in proportion to the insecurity of their friendships.

Your imagining my last letter artful, is a certain proof that we are not agreed about the idea of *true* and *false*, of *simple* and *artificial*. The confessing that I had received a letter from you sometime since, but did not answer it, lest it should bring on some disagreeable discussions, appears to me a truth so naked and unadorned, that to have suppressed it from a confidential friend, would have been harsh, and uncourteous. That all men are bound by the laws of nature, to assist the unhappy, but that the obligation of protecting merit, is reserved for the powerful,

ful, are simple and incontestible propositions. That it would be as inhuman not to succour our equals, as ridiculous to pretend to protect them, is a corollary which necessarily arises out of the preceding axiom. Now have the charity to tell me, how you were able to discover in a letter which contains truths so solid and so undisguised, an artifice so subtil as to be as much out of the reach of my penetration now, as it was distant from my thoughts when it was written? If the tenour of that letter was artful, the contrary will be simple: the following is therefore, according to your opinion, the manner in which I should have written, in order to avoid being artful: *I have been prevented from answering your letter by the multiplicity of my avocations, the want of health, the fault of the post which has been later than usual, &c. I am extremely unhappy at my inability to perform those offices for you which you require, having already expended my interest in favour of another, previous to your application; or else I shall do every thing in my power to second your wishes, and then without lying, avail myself in negotiating the business of the condition, as much as possible.*

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This may be the frank and simple manner which you wished for in my last letter : but before I adopt it, my dear Pasquini, I must make the experiment : *and hoc opus*. Adieu, my dear friend. Take care of your health, and believe me, without the least shadow of art, &c.

Vienna, April 15, 1756.

LETTER XVII.

TO THE SAME.

You cannot be ignorant, my dear Pasquini, of the circumstances in which the Empress Queen finds herself at present. You know that in order to avoid being swallowed up by a greedy neighbour, she is obliged to have in the field, one hundred and sixty thousand of her own troops ; without enumerating those of a single ally, or mentioning seventy or eighty thousand stationed in different garri-sons. And in knowing this, you may imagine how empty that treasury must be, while the usual revenue of her ancestors, who were never put to half this expence, is so much diminished ; and yet, in spite of this information, you wish to draw water from so exhausted

exhausted a fountain. But though this is an indubitable proof of the urgency of your wants, which penetrates me with compassion, yet it does not inspire me, for a moment, with sufficient courage to attempt a measure, which without being of any use to you, would justly entitle me to censure for my indiscretion. You must be certain that public distress must necessarily occasion private ; and will therefore, I hope, pity me, if to sympathise in your distress, is all the assistance, at present, in the power of your, &c.

Vienna, September 20, 1756.

L E T T E R XVIII.

TO THE SAME.

I AM extremely dissatisfied with your silence, and should be infinitely more discontented, if the occasion of it displeased me less. Your suffering under an infirmity is a sufficient excuse for you, but is no consolation for me ; nor at such a price do I wish to be innocent. If ever it should happen again, that through the temptation of the devil, you should think me guilty of neglecting you, take care not to have recourse to the stratagem

stratagem of illness. You may be mistaken for once in your measures; and such errors are pardonable. Let me rather scold: but what will be the consequence? Your ears must already be callous to my paternal homilies; and you know, by long experience, that I bite like a sheep, and not like a wolf.

My nervous affections are this year much encreased by the arrival of winter, and my patience is proportionably diminished. But what can I do? I have nothing for it but to suffer and hope: every weight ill carried is encreased in gravity. And as it is impossible for us to make human misery accommodate itself to our will, it is more prudent, and less fruitless, for us to try to accommodate ourselves to human misery.

But let us not plunge into the moralizing gulph. This is very often an hypochondriac effect, which by encouraging complaint, becomes itself a new cause for it.

Vienna, October 8, 1756.

We are enabled, by the correspondence with Pasquini, to judge of the frank and open manner with which our poet treated his old and intimate friends: and the following letter

letter may serve as a specimen of the delicacy and politeness with which he received the proffered friendship of new correspondents, who wished for his opinion of their works.

L E T T E R XIX.

TO THE CAVALIER ANTON-FILIPPO ADAMI.

I SHALL not dwell long on the excessive expressions of esteem with which you are pleased to honour me, in order to shun the fatigue and difficulty of defending myself from the assaults of vanity, by which, authorized by your approbation, I may be insidiously seduced. I am confused at the favourable judgment which you pronounce ; but shall not try to undeceive you, for fear I should shake the foundation of that friendship which you offer me, and which I wish to merit. I have repeatedly perused, Sir, and always with just admiration, the sonnets which you have been pleased to communicate to me. I have found in them all, a robust and noble style, deep learning, lively fancy, and, finally, that unity, proportion, and correspondence of the several parts, which distinguish an inhabit-

inhabitant of Parnassus from a traveller. Though I am pleased with them all, yet the sonnets on Providence have struck me the most. Perhaps the less austere physiognomy of these, exalts their comparative merit.

Whenever you shall be pleased to communicate to me your correct and polished productions, they will always afford me pleasure; particularly if they are accompanied with such commands as may afford me an opportunity, of manifesting with how much respect, and zeal, I have the honour to be, &c.

LETTER XX.

TO THE CAVALIER FARINELLI.

I AM proud, my dear Gemello, of the curiosity which you tell me I have raised in you concerning SIGNORA GABRIELLI; as, to the peculiar and uncommon merit of this young person, there is a coincidence of opinion: and this you may know from our friend Count *Rosenberg*, whose testimony is of weight; and you can examine him at your leisure. But as to the commission which you have given me of founding this virtuoso in
order

order to discover her sentiments concerning an engagement for your royal theatre, I am a great novice at it, and indeed have a natural aversion to this kind of business: however, I have executed it exactly. What would one not undertake for a Gemello?

The founding is reduced to this: whether she *will*, *can*, and *on what conditions*? It is unnecessary to enquire whether she *will* accept of an honour at which all are aspiring; but to the common eagerness, she has the stimulus of wishing for a personal acquaintance with You; being persuaded, that by observation and attention, she might acquire from your kindness, such intelligence in her profession as is not to be obtained elsewhere. So that the first point meets with no impediment.

Whether she *can* engage herself, is an article of still less difficulty: for she is not only able, but can do it at your convenience: this must be explained. Signora Gabrielli is still engaged at this Imperial theatre for two years more; but our august patroness having lately resolved to shut the lyric theatre during the present war, has had the clemency to acquaint this performer, that though her contract will not be terminated these two
years,

years, she is at liberty to engage herself elsewhere, if she should not chuse to remain idle. So that she can immediately enter into your service, and for as long a time as you please.

And finally, as to the *conditions* upon which she chuses to engage, they seem extremely discreet. She proposes the salary of *Mingotti* as a model; to whom she is superior in voice, agility, and figure, in female parts, and in other theatrical circumstances. She is ignorant what was allowed to her predecessor for travelling expences; but doubts not that the distance, and the companion which she must inevitably have in her journey, will be considered.

I have now executed your commission; and in return for my punctuality, I beg of you to be speedy in your answer, as this virtuosa, being unemployed, will doubtless have offers from other quarters; and it is but just that she should know whether she may accept them.

I discover new rivals every day: *Count Kaunitz* has spoken to me of you with great esteem and affection; and has particularly desired me to ask you, whether he stood as high in your favour now, as he did formerly, at Bologna.

You, my dear Gemello, are a Swiss, graft-

ed on a Piemontese; that is (among friends) obstinate as the one, and subtile as the other. I wrote for you : *Non prendo ancor l'impegno*; and you, like a good Piemontese, praised my verses, and explained them in a contrary sense : and like a perfect Swiss, return at midnight to your cups. Bless you ! my dear friend. You are in possession of a conjuring wand, and can do what you please. But let me now speak of myself.

I am unable to set about my new work at present, having four little august patronesses, who are fond of singing, that incessantly honour me with their commands. In summer they go into the country, and rural amusements usually serve as a parenthesis to music. I then hope to be wholly yours, if my nervous complaints do not drive me out of myself. In the mean time, I am trying to find some subject which will admit of the decorations which you have in your head. The assault, scaling-ladder, and taking a fort, in the ancient manner, are not incompatible with the decorations of our theatres at present, which are quite heroic ; but a *Fair*, and *illuminated Shops*, are wholly comic, and I know not how they would be received by the spectators. *Stampiglia* introduced them during the

the last century in one of his dramas called *Appius Claudius*. But comic characters had a principal share in this drama, and operas were then the bastards of comedy and tragedy, which by degrees are become legitimate and separate families. You may very well have an illumined square in the night, and instead of shops, may illuminate porticos, vestibles of temples, and other public buildings; but I dare not mention either *Fair* or *Shop* in my directions for shifting the scenes: as it would be giving a handle to the flippant impertinence of our little Roman Abate, with whose modesty you are well acquainted.

You, who know the country in which you reside, can judge whether its inhabitants are equally delicate: and in case they are not, you might announce in the book of the words *a square illuminated in a festive manner during the night*. And in this square you may represent such architecture as you shall think likely to delight the spectators. Give me a word or two, at your leisure, that I may meet your ideas, when the occupations in which I am engaged, and my capricious health, shall chance to give me permission.

I could have sworn that I had spoken to you concerning *Monsignor l' Augier (p)*. He is charmed with You, with your heart, and your conduct. He often visits me, notwithstanding his immeasurable corpulency; and mounts to the third story, where I reside, with the lightness of the most slim dancer. I shall for your sake, embrace as much as possible of his majestic circumference.

Monsignor Migazzi is at his bishopric: and he is destined by many here to succeed the dying archbishop of Vienna. I believe he does not aspire at this honour. He would not be a gainer in revenue, and would lose in tranquillity more than he would acquire in rank.

Before I finish my letter, I must add two reflections. The first is, that *Signora Gabrielli*, like the *Mingotti*, expects to have the *principal female part* assigned her, and that it should be *expressed* in the contract. The second reflection is my own, and is to advise you, if you have any intention that she should set out next summer, instantly to

(p) See *Germ. Tour* Vol. I. Art. Vienna. The physician of the Pope, and, I suppose, the Imperial physician, are qualified with the Title of *Monsignor*, my Lord.

send

send a contract for her to sign, to counteract all such temptations as she will certainly have from other quarters. Adieu, my dear Gemello. I can write no more.

Vienna, February 12, 1756.

L E T T E R XXI.

TO THE SAME.

IN spite of my involuntary delay, I am not in much fear of my dear Gemello accusing me in his own heart : he is perfectly acquainted with mine, and therefore incapable of believing me either cold in my friendship, or insincere in my promises. My obstinate nervous complaints ; numerous inevitable distractions ; the certainty of your not being in a hurry ; but above all, the ill-humour of my capricious muse, have conspired to impede my sending you the little cantata which you desired for two voices, so soon as I wished and had promised. Now, that you may allow me to be a conscientious man, I shall pay my debt with an interest of cent per cent ; and, instead of one cantata, send you two, written expressly for your use. The one intitled, *L' ABE, (the Bee)*

more sportive and chearful; and the other, which I have baptized, LA RITROSIA DISARMATA, (*peevishness disarmed*) more lively and characteristic (*q*). Both are calculated for action: and each, with two simple dresses, and a little verdant scene, may, on short notice, be performed as occasion shall serve. If you find nothing to please you in these productions, they will at least serve as testimonies of the author's friendly zeal; who hopes that you will continue to love him with the same affection as he loves you.

Vienna, August 21, 1756.

L E T T E R XXII.

TO THE SAME.

ON Tuesday evening, the 2d inst. (November) I received from the chancery of our court,

(*q*) The date of these cantatas, which is, erroneous in the last *Paris* edition, has been copied in all the subsequent impressions of our author's works, down to that of *Nice*, the most accurate and ample of them all. L'AFÉ has been said to be written for the Catholic court, in 1760; and LA RITROSIA DISARMATA in 1759; mistakes which will be corrected by the date of this letter, as well as by the history of

court, your letter of the 29th of September. So that to my great impatience, you see that it was thirty-four days on the road; which occasioned me the shame, and mortification, of thinking that you had neglected me, or been childishly mysterious concerning the fate of *Nitteti*; that was delivered here with several letters, a fortnight ago. God knows where the courier has diverted himself; but of this I am certain, that your letter has not been detained a moment at the chancery. The risks of private conveyance, my most beloved Gemello, have long determined me, to send my letters constantly by the post, on the certainty of their being delivered to you in two and twenty days. But let us waste no more time in such a useless discussion. I rejoice with you sincerely, in the universal applause and admiration, which the magnificence and splendor with which you have seasoned my *Nitteti*, have procured her. Who would not gladly write operas with the certainty of their becoming prodigies in your hands?

You tell me, that by the time your letter

of the times: the princes, for the use of whose court these little pieces were written, being both deceased at the time they have been said to be produced.

M 4

arrives,

arrives, I must have received two copies of the opera. These are not yet arrived, and I know not where to seek them, as you have not mentioned by what channel they were to be conveyed. The best part of the story is, that the opera is already printed at Rome, and it may happen, that this edition will arrive at Vienna before that of Madrid.

I have now to tease you. *Cardinal Landi* has a secretary, who is a poet; he is an Abate of the name of BANDINI. He has written several dramas, one of which, entitled *Sylla*, I have seen, and find it very happily versified, and not devoid of theatrical merit. In short, he is, in my opinion, the best writer, in that way, among those who are at present employed. He aspires much at the glory of seeing some of his offspring appear on your royal theatre; and his Cardinal has written me a long and pressing letter about him, as if a word from me were sufficient to establish him in your favour. That word you have now received: its effect depends on your convenience. All I require is an attestation from you, that I have performed my part in the business; therefore in your next letter to me, pray insert such a paragraph

graph as I may transmit to the cardinal, to unburthen myself of the commission.

I am proud of the affectionate contention between you and our dear *Count Rosenberg*; but I laugh at the impossibility of either of you imitating, the inimitable tenderness with which I am both his and your servant.

Vienna, November 6, 1756.

LETTER XXIII.

TO THE SAME.

AT length I have been informed, that two little books directed to me were in the custom-house, and the day before yesterday they were brought to me, with a letter inclosed from my amiable Gemello, written September 12th; so that malignant fate has kept it back two months, in spite of all your care and diligence. It seemed necessary to inform you of this; lest from the tenour of my last letter, you should imagine both the books and your own letter lost. Your expressions perfectly agree with the partiality which you have always had for me and my writings.

writings. Such convincing proofs of esteem and affection are grateful, even from indifferent persons; consider then what delight they must afford, when they are bestowed by persons beloved in such a manner as you are, by your most faithful Gemello.

I know not whether the model of my *Beroe** resembles your Spanish young females; but this I know, that compared with ours, I seem to have violated the rules of probability.

Migazzi has not yet appeared. Embrace my tyrant *Rosenberg*; but with such heartiness that he shall remember it: my slighted tenderness merits such vengeance. You must not forget an ostensible period for *Cardinal Landi*, and believe me bomb proof.

Vienna, November 13, 1756.

L E T T E R XXIV.

TO THE SAME.

I SHALL answer the two letters, which though written at the distance of a month from each other, are now just arrived together; I know not whether from that which was first written travelling too slow,

* A character in *Nitteti*.

or

or the second too fast; but however this may have been, I shall now give you an account of my commissions.

With respect to the duet, I think you are too complacent in humouring all the caprices of our singers. Ever since I began to write poetry for music, I, who am not by many miles so good as you are, have shut, nailed, or rather built up, the door, against all changes of words. We should be harassed indeed, if every maggoty theatrical Nymph, dainty Adonis, or soppyish Composer, were to decide on the merit of the poetry, and make us change the parts of an edifice, as if it were composed of cards. You who are now subject to these plagues, tell me if it does not seem necessary to repress the unbridled impertinence of these people. But do not imagine, most beloved Gemello, that all this preaching arises from an aversion to labour, or unwillingness to oblige you: to remove all doubt of my reluctance, I inclose the duet, not only changed in one, but in two different ways; there is nothing disagreeable to me, which pleases my dear Gemello; but it is necessary to check your usual facility, that you may not be always the victim of unreasonable people, who are

never to be satisfied. If you had assigned a reason for wishing to change the duet, I should have adapted myself to the opinion of others; but this is to divine it blind-fold: and though I pass for a middling poet, yet I have nothing of the prophet in me. In your second letter, you say: "now they will have no duet:" *fiat lux—make it then*, says Arlequin. Well, Heaven grant you patience. Though, as far as I can see, you have already as much as Job or St. Hilary.

At length our noble and worthy *Monsignor Migazzi* is arrived in Vienna: and at our first meeting we have almost suffocated each other with the number and violence of our embraces, and those which he brought from you, by commission. I have put his patience to extraordinary trials, with my numerous and minute questions concerning your health, way of life, friendship for me, and the public approbation which you have so well contrived to merit. He went so far as to tell me, that, conscious of your heroic conduct in circumstances so seducing, he might venture to canonise you without the fear of opposition. Figure to yourself, if you can, how sweet such music must be to the ears of your

your most faithful and affectionate Gemello. Heaven preserve and bless you, *Amen*.

I am told this instant, that my most august Patroness is happily brought to bed of a little Arch-duke. *Te Deum laudamus*. I hope that providence, which has hitherto preserved her in similar circumstances, will protect her from all accidents. The christening will be at 7 o'clock this evening, and the new terrestrial pilgrim will be named Maximilian. This is being a very obliging consort, to present her husband with a male child on his own birth-day. But what cannot the admirable MARIA THERESA do? I write amidst the harmonious acclamations of the people, who are running in crouds towards the court. The opera which will be represented to-night in the public theatre, will certainly meet with applause: what is there that cannot please on such a day? The drama is my *Re Pastore*, set by Gluck; a Bohemian composer, whose spirit, noise, and extravagance, have supplied the place of merit in many theatres of Europe, among those whom I pity, and who do not constitute the minority of the folks of this world. Thank God, we have no want of such auditors here.

The

The first woman is *Signora Catarina GABRIELLI, Romana*: a young performer, who certainly has not her equal for excellence in voice, taste, or action. (Pray take notice by way of Parenthesis, that I am not in love with her.) Our *Monsignor l'Augier*, when he first heard her, burst into rapturous expressions of wonder and delight; and it was only doing her justice. The first man is *Sig. MAZZANTI*, a great player on the violin infalset; but even He has his admirers, as we have palates for every kind of sauce. When I hear singing, I am not satisfied with mere surprise, but wish the heart to have a share in the delights of the ear. But this is a science granted only to few; and nature does not often go out of her way to make *FARINELLIS*. The other singers of our opera, to shorten my narrative, you may imagine what you please.

I am glad you esteem our most worthy *Count de Rosenbergh*: in this particular, I have no pretensions to emulate you; but as to love, I shall claim my ancient rights with my utmost vigour. If you are guilty of any foul play, expect a furious satire in your praise, in which my rival will have the principal part. In the act of reverencing
and

and embracing him in my name, I leave you to chant the Antiphon.

Cruel Gemello ! and do you still want me to suffer the pangs of child-birth again ! After so many labours, do you think I have not lost the power of bringing forth ? Do all the nauseas, the breeding qualms ; the throes, and fears of miscarriages and abortions, which I have experienced, go for nothing ? any more than the apprehensions, occasioned by the rank and penetration of the demy-gods for whom I am to encrease my offspring ? I have been so rewarded, that I have not the courage to refuse ; but I fear the enterprise so much, that I dare not undertake it.

*Non ti minaccio sdegni,
Non ti prometto amor :
Non prendo ancor l'impegno,
Non lo ricuso ancor (r).*

I threaten not disdain,
Nor flatt'ring language use ;
My sentence I restrain,
But do not quite refuse,

Adieu my ever dear and admirable Gemello.

Vienna, December 8, 1756.

(r) Parody of an air in the first act of *Catone in Utica*,

L E T.

L E T T E R XXV.

TO THE SAME.

You tell so many people that you love me, and publish it so expressly in print, that there is not a corner of the habitable earth so obscure, as to be ignorant of my enviable good fortune (s). I pay you with interest; and am pleased, that a kind of public compact, secures to me a friendship which indeed has no occasion for props to support it : as it is founded upon an ancient reciprocal, affectionate, and disinterested, propensity. But as every medal has its reverse ; this, my dear Gemello, is not in want of one. Innumerable are the people who aspire at the patronage of your court, who sigh for your support, and who apply to me as to your Benjamin. There is no character that I abhor so much as an encroaching and importunate acquaintance. And as I know you

(s) Alluding to the account published in all the gazettes and newspapers of the time, concerning the success, and splendid manner in which the dramas of Metastasio were represented at the court of Spain,

must

must be teased from morning to night by indiscreet pretenders, I am seized with a shivering fit, when any one of the hundreds of this kind of cattle accosts me with the melifluous interrogation of : *when, Sig. Abate, shall you write to your dear Gemello ?* But in order to parry the thrust, I immediately reply that I have just written, and that we only correspond at the moveable feasts. Some understand me, and are silent ; but the major part are ticks, and stick so close to me, that it is impossible to get rid of them, but by speaking the truth, and protesting, that I neither will nor ought to importune you, to expend your interest for persons utterly unknown to you. But when by this and other means I have freed myself from a hundred assaults of a similar kind, comes the hundred and first petition, which from respect, obligation, or the influence of a friend, and perhaps from a little secret pride of keeping alive my credit with you, I have not the power to resist.

Of this last kind is the request which has been made to me by COUNT FIGUEROLA, counsellor in the supreme council of Flanders ; a most worthy man, of great credit, and my particular friend. He has a brother

in Spain, called *D. Antonio Figuerola*, who is in great want of your interest, in support of his pretensions to be appointed *Lieutenant Corregidor of the city of Tarazona*, in *Catalogna*: and I implore your kindness in his favour. From the repugnance which you know I have to trouble you on such occasions, you may judge of the impulse which has forced me to subdue it. I can offer you no return but the pleasure which your beneficent nature finds in performing kind offices. The petition will be made to you by *Count Rosenberg*, to whom *Count Figuerola* tells me he has written: and in this business, I enter into partnership with him, in spite of our rivalry. But that the length of my letter may not be more fatiguing than the recommendation, I embrace you with my accustomed affection, and am, &c.

Our august Patroness thinks no more of her lying-in; she has already admitted many ladies to kiss her hands, and cannot be prevented from resuming her attention to public affairs.

Vienna, December 18, 1756.

END OF THE THIRD SECTION.

SECTION IV.

METASTASIO seems never to have plunged into politics with his pacific friend Farinelli ; but during the heat of the war of 1756, between the King of Prussia and the Empress Queen, he appears in his letters to his brother, and a few of his other correspondents, to have espoused the interests of his Imperial Patroness with great zeal, and to have mentioned with heartfelt pleasure, every advantage which fortune conceded to her arms.

In a letter to the Marquis Carlo Cavalli of Ravenna, January 3d, 1757, he says : “the news of this great empire is so interesting to the rest of the world, that there is hardly a corner of the earth which does not feel anxious for its fate. Its cause is to vindicate all humanity from the injuries which it suffers from the violation of charity, justice, and good faith, the most necessary bonds of society.

“Our most beloved sovereign has in Bohemia, one hundred and forty thousand men,

well provided, without mentioning a single foreigner. Muscovy has in motion, one hundred and thirty thousand, and France as many. On the 11th of the present month, the diet of Ratisbon will proceed to declare this a war of the empire; and lastly, the grand Signor of the Turks will concur in helping to oppress the oppressor; so that if some unforeseen accident does not prevent it, I know not how the enemy can escape destruction."

But previous to this period, at the beginning of hostilities, he writes his brother word, that "on the 28th of August, (1756) the King of Prussia entered Saxony with a considerable army; laid the country under contribution, and the good King (Augustus II.) who had given him no offence. It is pretended, that the extraordinary number of troops which we had sent into Bohemia and Moravia, had made him expect to be assailed, and determined him to prevent us by an irruption into Bohemia: but hearing some months ago of his motions, these provinces were put into a state of defence." And he afterwards tells his brother, that the two armies of the King of Prussia are retiring
from

from Bohemia, notwithstanding his boasted victory at Lobositz, in which we are now certain that he lost seven generals. The King of Poland is at Warsaw, but all the royal family still remains at Dresden. These are curious times.

“We have here (at Vienna) our modern *Fabius*, and our *Marcellus*; so that martial ire sleeps at present. The declaration of war by the King of Spain, furnishes much subject for conversation. Hostilities will now acquire fresh vigour, instead of becoming more calm, if the English do not lower their imperious tone. A difficult metamorphosis to bring about.

“To the common news of the Czarina’s death, which you and every one must have heard, let me add the following information, which is just come: *Yesterday arrived a courier from Petersburg, at this court, with two letters written by the new Czar to the Emperor and Empress; in which is confirmed, the alliance and engagements contracted by the late sovereign with the court of Austria, in all their most minute circumstances.*”

This declaration, however, was enfeebled soon after, by the following information.—

“*A courier from Petersburg last Tuesday, brings word, that Warantzof, the Czar’s prime minister, had communicated to ours, and to the ministers of other courts, that his master, stimulated by motives of humanity, ardently wished that the horrors of this obstinate war should cease; and that his allies might adopt his pacific sentiments, he was ready to relinquish all advantages.*”—This declaration was but the prelude to neutrality, and the presage of that disunion of the courts of Petersburg and Vienna, which soon happened, to the great relief of the King of Prussia, at a time when his ruin was thought inevitable. Metastasio details to his brother, the principal events of the times, till the year 1762, when the Czar was deposed, and the present Empress, his consort, ascending the throne, declared war against the King of Prussia.

In 1757, our poet, always a faithful son of the church and city of Rome, and consequently no well wisher to the King of Prussia, and the protestant powers; though he constantly expresses himself with moderation, yet he writes triumphantly to his friend Sig. Argenvilliers, that "on the 12th of November, our Marchal Daun, after three vigorous attacks, had seized on
I Schweidnitz,

Schweidnitz. On the 22d, after thirteen attacks, he had entirely defeated the army before Breslau, commanded by the Prince of Bevern, in their horrible trenches, which were thought insuperable: an instance of valour, of which there has been no example for many ages. And this moment further intelligence is brought, that the commander, the Prince of Bevern himself, is made prisoner; but I am not yet acquainted with the particulars. I should write more, but am going to see the general Duke d'Urfel pass by, who formally brings the news, preceded by a procession of postillions."

But soon after, he is obliged to confess to the same correspondent, that the unfortunate battle of the 5th of December, and its necessary consequence, the capitulation of Breslau, were but too true. "A body of thirteen thousand men who abandoned our left wing, rendered it impossible for our brave Austrians to save the town. We must have patience. Our troops are at present in winter quarters, but in that comfortless repose, which prepares for new fatigues."

L E T T E R I.

TO SIG. FILIPPONI, AT TURIN.

I AM more late than I wished in answering your letter of last February, depending on your indulgence, more than on that of a number of troublesome correspondents to whom I am obliged to write, in answer to letters full of nothing; which, however, I dare not treat with neglect. You know that I am shot at by all the insects of Parnassus; and not a week passes that I do not curse the inventor of posts, and wish him with all my heart in one of Dante's infernal bogs, with the little devil who *made the trumpet*, you know of what (*t*). But these are days of penitence, so we must curb our anger, and regard our persecutions as expiations of poetical sins.

If my *Nitteti* has found favour in your sight, I shall congratulate myself on this new proof of your partiality. But if the Marquis Ormea has any intention of bringing it on

(*t*) See DANTE, *Inferno*, Canto xxi, at the end.

your

your stage, I must inform him, that its success will entirely depend on the character of Nitteti being well acted.

I do not send you my cantata on the *Calidonian Chase*, because your curiosity may be gratified by the Cavalier *Raiberti*, to whom Sig. Canale has furnished a copy. As to the performance and printing of this and Nitteti, with all the corrections and alterations that may be necessary, I leave them to my friends, as I never lick my own cubs; I should have too much employment if I did.

The type and price of the new edition of my works are quite what they should be; but the paper merits no praise. As to correctness, God help us!

Vienna, March 14, 1757.

LET-

L E T T E R II.

TO THE SAME.

I SHALL answer your two letters of the 23d of last month, and the 7th instant, together. For the commission in the first concerning COUNT GOVEANO, you have addressed yourself to a poor commissary ; as I have but little communication with the military hierarchy. Add to this, that all our heroes are at present in the field ; and that Prince *Litchtenstein*, who is still here, and to whom I intended to address myself in favour of our studious Cavalier, being extremely occupied at court, in the present agitation of public affairs, is not easily accessible ; and if he was, I should not find him in that tranquil state of mind which I should wish, for the furtherance of our business. However, when a favourable opportunity presents itself, I shall not forget your petition. Now for the second letter.

I envy the fate of my picture, which is so much carressed ; and for a thousand reasons would change situations with it for some
time

time to come. I am told, that it is extremely like ; so that you may safely set your friendly and affectionate imagination to work.

I thank you for the solicitude concerning the correction of my works in this new edition. Pray desire the printer to regulate his press by that of Paris: supplying, in my sacred dramas, the omissions of the texts of scripture, and citations from the fathers. These being no less necessary for the honour, than safety of the author.

I entreat you to express my most grateful sentiments to the worthy advocate, SIGNOR BRUNI, for his partial commemoration of me in your *Licæum*. Though I despair of ever deserving it, yet I cannot help being ambitious of his friendship, of obeying his commands, and of manifesting my opinion of his worth. Besides public occasions for ill-humour, a humour in my eyes gives me private cause for peevishness ; I shall therefore hasten to assure you, that in all humours, I am, &c,

Vienna, May 23d, 1757.

LET-

L E T T E R III.

TO THE SAME.

I SEND you *il Sogno*, correctly transcribed for the press; and a sonnet on the last victory, which may serve as a counterpoison to the malignant piety of those who would assign it to a miracle, in order to diminish the glory of those who have earned it.

I have sent a copy of the Roman edition of *Nitteti*, which has been corrected; but I must beg of you to tell the compositor to use no capitals, except at the beginning of a verse, and to proper names. This drama ought absolutely to precede the juvenile poetry, which is usually called *additions*; but I shall be content with whatever place you shall assign it. The sonnet to my dear FARINELLI should have admission among the lyric poetry, and not at the front of *Nitteti*. Forgive my unavoidable laconism, and believe me, &c.

Vienna, August 29, 1757.

L E T -

L E T T E R IV.

TO THE SAME.

WITH your most affectionate letter of the 22d of October, I receive proofs of three frontispieces to the Turin edition of my works. They appear to me in very good taste; graceful, well designed, and well executed. I am much obliged to you for your care in this particular, and if the accuracy of the press is correspondent, we shall have reason to be satisfied with the impression.

I shall be glad of a few proofs, to gratify parental curiosity; but do not lay too heavy a burthen on the editors. You who have long known me, should make me a little known to them. Adieu.

Vienna, November 7, 1757.

L E T T E R V.

TO THE ABATE PASQUINI.

THE lively description which you make in your letter of the 13th of last month, concerning

cerning your sufferings in the city of *Siena*, do more honour to the rhetoric than the philosophy of the writer. If ever it should come into your head to undertake it, I am certain that you could give a similar aspect to a residence at Rome or Athens. I admire this seducing faculty, and should treat it with still more respect, if you knew how to set a proper value on the advantages which are in your power; reflecting on all those desirable circumstances which can render life tolerable, if not happy. For though mortals are not gifted with the art of accommodating circumstances to their convenience, they may accommodate themselves to circumstances. But methinks I hear you say, that it is easy to preach up fasting, upon a full stomach: and I tell you, that we have all occasion for compassion, though all are not willing to bestow it. For my own part, I must confess, either from moderation or pride, that I avoid, as much as possible, the finding from the pity of others, proofs of that misery which I wish to conceal from myself. But enough of moralizing.

COUNT RICHECOURT, who set off for Florence this evening, told me a few nights ago, unsolicited, that he believed he
should

should accomplish your business; as nothing but the sovereign's fiat was wanting, which from the disposition in which he had brought and left him, he had no doubt of obtaining. The Emperor is in Bohemia: so that, at present, I am to give you no further information about it. But if the thing is done, you will perhaps hear of it before me. Suspend your thanks, however, to the Count, till you canonically know that the favour is granted: as I had no commission given me to tell you thus much. If ever this ripe apple has occasion for another shake to bring it from the bough, I shall borrow the arm of COUNT LOSI. Do not paint misfortune with all the vigour of your genius. I am, &c.

Vienna, August 17, 1757.

Poor Pasquini's appointment was not confirmed till the next year, as appears by the following congratulatory letter from Metastasio.

L E T.

L E T T E R VI.

TO THE ABATE PASQUINI.

HAVING this moment received your most welcome letter of the 6th inst. containing the long wished for information of your being elected to the office of Vice-rector of your college, I congratulate not only you, but myself, and the *Siena Lyceum*, on this event.

I am extremely obliged to the *Abate Cantini*, who has so well seconded my zeal, and I wish you may long enjoy the fruits of this appointment, in that philosophical tranquillity which gives to necessities all the effect of opulence ; not indeed in the superabundance of wealth, but paucity of wants. Take care of your health, continue to love me, and to assure yourself, that I am with invariable constancy, &c.

Vienna, February 20, 1758.

This is the last letter in the collection from METASTASIO to PASQUINI. He is frequently mentioned with affection in subsequent

sequent letters to his other correspondents, particularly to LIVIA ACCARIGI, a poetess of a noble family at Siena, who sent METASTASIO her works for his advice, or rather approbation. In concluding a letter to this lady, in October 1763, he says: "you enjoy the company of my admirable friend, *il Padre maestro* AZZONI. Pray put him frequently in mind of my esteem and sincere affection. How will PASQUINI triumph in having ravished him from me! I must have patience. But let him, at least, appease my envy, by giving me frequent proofs of his own affection."

In December following, however, addressing himself to the same lady at Siena; he says:

"The unhappy and unexpected loss of our poor ABATE PASQUINI has truly wounded me to the heart. He was a man perfectly amiable in his natural character, distinct from his talents; and one who returned, with exemplary gratitude, the affection of his true friends. I feel, and shall long feel, the want of him; and the more so, on reflecting how great a loss he must be to you, and to our most worthy PADRE AZZONI, who knew his merit, and how to prize even his

transports; which, though they varied his character, never deprived it.

“ The continuation of your most valuable friendship will be a great source of consolation to me; an acquisition for which I shall be always grateful to the memory of my dear friend, from whose kindness it was derived. Try, dear Madam, to divert your attention from this afflicting event, by an innocent commerce with the muses, who are so ready to favour you whenever you call upon them.”

L E T T E R VII.

TO THE CAVALIER FARINELLI.

HAVING this instant read a categorical answer from SIGNORA GABRIELLI, I hasten to communicate it to you, in order to save the post. Your letter to me, my dear Gemello, was divided into two parts; the one contained a plain proposition, and the other an insinuation, to be used discretionally. The plain proposition, was an offer of the place of SIGNORA PARIGI to the GABRIELLI, at Easter 1759. The second clause, or insinuation,

uation, was to inform me, that it might be necessary to supply the place immediately, of the SIGNORA CASTELLINI, who had thoughts of returning to Italy.

To the plain proposition or offer, SIGNORA GABRIELLI says, *that she accepts*, with the most respectful submission, the honour proposed to her of succeeding SIGNORA PARIGI in the service of their most clement majesties of Spain, at the feast of the resurrection, in 1759; so that if the accustomed article is sent, in which she is allowed the title of first woman, with a salary of one thousand two hundred doubloons, like that granted to the MINGOTTI, she will immediately return a duplicate of it, signed and executed in the usual manner. She adds, it is her hope, that the present which was made to the MINGOTTI, of three hundred doubloons more, will be granted to her, by the royal munificence of these sovereigns, to defray the expence of so long a journey. And if this request is complied with by their Catholic majesties, she entreats to have it specified in the contract, as an honourable testimony of the generosity with which *she was treated by so great a court*. So that this first business seems finally adjusted, and open to no objection.

The other has been insinuated, and seems very feasible. The GABRIELLI is so desirous and impatient to throw herself at the feet of such magnificent sovereigns, in hopes of being honoured with their approbation, that she will be very ready to obey their commands at Madrid, before the Easter of 1759, or the present autumn, if necessary; notwithstanding that it depends only on herself to remain here in repose, during the two years which are unexpired of her contract, or to accept of the place of first woman at Milan. But as she is persuaded, that the clemency of these august sovereigns, and the equity of my dear Gemello, would not wish that she should injure her future interest by her zeal, she presumes to propose the following expedient.

That with the article for the Easter of 1759, in which she has the title of *first woman*, another may be sent for an earlier period, without the expression of either *first* or *second*, with the same annual salary and present, specified in the first article.

And in consideration of her respectful compliance with the second proposal, by relinquishing the title of *first woman*, she hopes that it will be supplied by that of *Virtuosa di Camer a,*

Camera, or simply, *Virtuosa in the service of their Catholic majesties*, which is left to their sovereign pleasure and your discernment; and hopes, that her zeal and diligence will enable her to obtain that benign notice, which her limited talents may fail to merit.

I ought to be diffuse in expressions of gratitude, respect, and prayers on the part of SIGNORA GABRIELLI, for the continuance of your partiality; but if I lengthen my letter, the post will go without it. You must therefore set your imagination to work in her behalf. I shall only add, that you will have a good bargain, which in your hands will soon be greatly encreased in its value: as there is excellent stuff to work upon.

His excellence, *Count Kaunitz*, embraces you affectionately, echoing most gratefully your own expressive language. My nose is ashamed of your generosity. Adieu. The rest is reserved for another letter.

Vienna, April 24, 1757.

L E T T E R VIII.

TO THE SAME.

THE article in your letter of the 7th of June, concerning the melancholy accident that happened at the fireworks, has given me a high opinion of the sensibility of your heart; it could not, however, occasion remorse. I congratulate you on the laudable sentiments of charity which this event awakened in your mind, and wish you an unlimited power of gratifying it.

I send you our SIGNORA GABRIELLI's article, signed and executed. And am commissioned to express to you the confusion, reverence, and submission, with which she has received the royal testimonies of your magnanimous sovereign's favour: and the indelible gratitude which she shall always retain, for the benevolent and friendly hand that has procured her such enviable honours. She wishes to testify all this in her own hand; and if her letter arrives, as I expect, before this is sealed, I shall inclose it.

While

While I write, you will partake of our felicity. You must have heard how the heroic constancy of our most august sovereign, the wisdom of our cabinet, the masterly conduct of MARSHAL DAUN, and the prodigious valour of our troops, have changed, in six hours time, the fate of Europe. You predicted this in your letter: so that I shall expedite to you, in form, a solemn patent of prophet. I should gladly write more on this agreeable subject; but besides your being previously informed of this event, a violent inflammation in my eyes has rendered writing a very painful operation; so that I shall deny myself the satisfaction of repeating an old story.

Vienna, July 11, 1757.

L E T T E R IX.

TO THE SAME.

OH what snuff! Oh what nectar for the Gods! Oh what a delicate and delicious drug! At length, the day before yesterday, and not sooner, the long wished for chest arrived, after a thousand dangers, impediments, and wanderings, more strange than those of

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Ulysses.

Ulysses. And yet it is still in the highest perfection, without having suffered the least injury from so long a voyage. It was hardly entered the house, before my impatient nose went to work with great sensuality: and found three admirable different sorts; but that in the two vases, upon which was written *Habana*, is as much superior to the other two, as my Gemello is to all other heroes of the harmonic family. During these two days, every intelligent nose of this country has admired and envied it: and I fatten with the glory, that all the proudest snuff boxes in the city give way, without the least dispute, to mine. And as there is not a mole that is ignorant of our twinship, whenever my *Havanah* is handed about in company, I hear a sweet murmur, which, in repeating the name of my dear Gemello, exalts his supreme discernment in great as well as little things. Imagine to yourself my pleasure, and how certain, if I had not been yours before, you were now of taking me by the nose.

When you required me to return SIGNORA PARIGI's letter, I trembled lest I should have been so thoughtless as to burn it: as, in order to avoid confusion, I generally do all letters that have been answered. But,
thank

thank Heaven, I had preserved this, and now return it. I cannot however avoid telling you, my dear Gemello, that you are too good a christian, and pay too great attention to the follies of our tragi-comic nymphs, who only deserve laughter, or at most, compassion. I shall be glad if our GABRIELLI is an exception to the rule. She commissions me to present her best compliments to you, and protests, that you are her *Cynosure*, and that there is nothing of which she is so ambitious, as of becoming your pupil.

I have not written to you a long while, partly not to tease you about trifles, while I knew you were so busy; partly from expecting the snuff every moment, and partly from the disorder in my eyes, rendering both reading and writing very painful. And it is an enviable quality in me, not to bear to be alone when any evil has befallen me : You see how amiable my company must be at such times.

My muses, more harlots than ever, hardly, deign at present, to come near me; though I am now called upon by my little serene Patronesses, who are all more musical than ever. However, if I had met with a happy subject, I should have made them come whether they
would

would or no, in order to satisfy the gluttony of my Gemello. But after writing so much, it is not easy to find subjects which will not bring me back to myself. Nevertheless, you are always next my heart; I think of you, and when I shall say *ti prometto amor*, the law will be inviolable. In the mean time, pardon me for writing little things for others; they cost as much trouble as great, because the difficulty is in the invention, not the number of verses; and at last, do little credit. If you wish to put the muses in good humour, it must be by a better account of your health. Regard my nose as your slave to all eternity, and believe me, &c.

Vienna, October 22, 1757.

L E T T E R X.

TO THE SAME.

YOUR little, short, and mysterious, letter of the 17th of last July, from *Aranjuez*, together with the news received at this court, and spread among us, tells me but too plainly, the state of your mind, and anxiety of all good people, concerning the health

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of

of your venerated sovereign. Would to Heaven this storm may blow over, in spite of the terrible descriptions which are sent hither from all parts.

SIGNOR MARCHESINI, whom I cordially and gratefully salute, writes me word in your name, *that you are impatient for an answer from MONTICELLI*. How is it possible, that in so long a time, you should not have received my final answer to this business, together *with Monticelli's original letter*; in which this Virtuoso explains himself in the most unequivocal manner, by saying: that *the salary offered to him is inadequate to his expectations, and that you are at liberty to seek another singer*? I rather believe that Sig. Marchesini has misunderstood your commission, and applied to Monticelli, your impatience at the tardy arrival of *Monfignor l'Augier's* answer; who, (by way of parenthesis) upon being interrogated by me, swears upon the *agnus dei*, that he wrote to you on the 10th of June. Now these enormous irregularities in our correspondence, are phænomena for which I am utterly unable to account. I recommended to you, in the discreet terms to which I always restrain myself, the affair of the *Marquis Doria*, second-

ing

ing the wishes of our court. This is another firrup from which I am unable to exempt you ; throw it down, and afterwards throw it up, if your stomach dislikes it ; but, for Heaven's sake, answer me, or employ somebody else to save my credit.

Cardinal Alexander Albani, with whom I never was in correspondence, writes to me in the most pressing manner, to desire, that in consequence of our public and notorious affection, I would recommend to you for your theatre royal, *Sig. GIUSEPPE TOZZI*, a soprano, whom I have never known, seen, or heard ; nor did I suspect, till now, that such a person existed among us miserable mortals. Tell me, in charity, how I can refuse writing a letter, at the instigation of a pillar of the holy mother church ? Tell me, in mercy, how far you think yourself obliged to attend to a recommendation, which is no further seconded by me, than it may happen to suit with your interest and convenience ? Tell me, in compassion, what it will cost you to give me two words of answer, that I may shew them for my justification ? Adieu, my dear Gemello ; if you knew how dear you are to my heart, you would take care of your health. This letter is intended as the

letter of recommendation of SIGNOR TOZZI;
so that I expect no *formal* answer to any
other business.

Vienna, August 19, 1758,

LETTER XI.

TO THE SAME.

I HAVE not the heart, my dearest friend,
to irritate your wounds by long complaints;
I judge of what you must suffer, from the
impression which our irreparable loss has
made on my own mind; and should rather
think the attempt to console you, a cruelty,
than an office of kindness. Time, neces-
sity, resignation to the will of providence,
and your own prudence, and christian re-
flexions, will obtain you that tranquillity,
which it would be in vain for me to attempt
to recommend to you. Take care of your-
self, during this severe trial, and remember
that you have innumerable companions in
your most just and laudable affliction (*u*).

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(*u*) This calamity, was the death of the Queen of
Spain, Maria Barbara, infanta of Portugal. She was mar-
ried to Ferdinand, Prince of Asturias in 1728, who as-
cended

I can no longer doubt, my dear friend, that many of my letters to you have miscarried. The occasion of this failure cannot have been at Vienna. I have made all possible enquiry, but find no cause for blame here. Do you do the same at Madrid, and try to discover, whether some ingenious personage has not tried to save you the tiresome task of reading my letters.

cended the throne of Spain in 1746. This Princess was the scholar and Patroness of *Domenico Scarlatti*, who composed his first two books of harpsichord lessons, that were published in England by Roseingrave, for her use. When she went to Spain, in 1728, Scarlatti followed her thither, and continued to enjoy her favour till the time of his death, in 1757, at seventy-four. This original composer and great performer, like many men of genius and talents, was so inattentive to common concerns, and so much addicted to play, that he was frequently distressed in his circumstances, and as often extricated by the bounty of his royal mistress; who, as Farinelli assured me, not only often paid his debts, but, at his intercession, continued a pension of four thousand crowns to his widow and three daughters, who were left destitute at his decease. The death of this Princess, whose liberality equalled her taste and knowledge in music and poetry, was severely felt by Metastasio and Farinelli; who, though they long survived their royal Patroness, enjoyed but seldom, afterwards, the fragrant incense of public acclamation, or of royal praise equally flattering, with that which they had so long been accustomed to receive from this Queen, whose name is still mentioned with grateful reverence by the Spaniards.

This

This failure may have been occasioned by the irregularity of the post, as I sent my letters by that channel, in order to avoid incommoding the minister more than was necessary; but, as my letters had hitherto been regularly delivered to you in this common way, it becomes an accident the more extraordinary, particularly, as *my letters to you concerning Monticelli are missing*. This is a circumstance that may lead to a discovery. As far as I can remember, the following were the contents of these letters.

When you commissioned me to treat with Monticelli for Madrid, I had the proposition made to him by the banker, and not by myself, that no suspicions may be raised by the use of my name, during such troublesome times at Dresden. Monticelli answered, that he was at liberty to accept the engagement, as his article with Dresden expired exactly at the time that you should want him. I gave you advice of all this; and with that sincerity which is due to such a friend as you, who confided in my report, I gave you a minute description of the present qualifications of Monticelli, as to voice, manner, diligence, action, and way of thinking: in order that, by shewing you both sides of the medal, you might

might judge of his powers, and act accordingly. To all this exactitude you have given me no kind of answer. You, however, sent me proposals for Monticelli, and I had them transcribed, word for word, and forwarded to Dresden. The answer of Monticelli was sent to me, and was in substance, "that the terms offered to him were not equal to the great expence and length of the journey: that he thanked you, and left you at liberty to treat with any other singer." For fear of altering a single word in this answer, I sent you the original, in Monticelli's hand writing, so long ago as last May.

Another business, concerning which I have had no answer, was the recommendation, by order of our court, of a certain Marquis Doria. And still another, concerning the indisposition of our Arch-bishop Migazzi. *Item.* In all these letters, I complained of your cruelty in speaking to me of writing operas, while the enemy was within nine posts of Vienna, bombarding Olmutz. And gave you to understand, that while so furious and bloody a war raged at our doors, it was not a time for a poor frightened gentleman, to be thinking of *Ariets*, or theatrical amours. But you took not the least

least notice of these impediments in your answer.

Item. In my letter of the 18th or 19th of last month, I recommended a Soprano singer of the name of *Tozzi*, for your theatre, at the instigation of his Eminence Cardinal Alessandro Albani; but to this no answer has yet arrived.

The pleasantries which you hear from Italy concerning our *Signora Gabrielli*, are but too true. She is young, an Italian, favoured by nature, and of transcendent abilities in music: so that it is not extraordinary, that like other Sirens, she should be capricious. But in Your hands, I hope she will be more prudent. She is perfectly persuaded of her own merit, and yet is extremely timid. In order to moderate that impetuosity which her talents may inspire, it will, perhaps, be necessary to impress her mind with great respect, or rather, positive fear of the sovereign and the court; but that it may not depress her spirits too much in performance, it will be necessary likewise for you to encourage her by your approbation, and the applause of your friends; and I assure you that she will merit it. Indeed you are a more expert pilot than me, and I doubt not but you will turn your

science to good account. At Vienna, Milan, and Lucca, where this young performer was dexterously managed, she enchanted every mortal who heard her ; but at Padua, where they wished to use the whip more than the spur, they threw away their money.

I can write no more, my dear Gemello : I therefore embrace you tenderly, and am, &c.

Vienna, September 23, 1758.

L E T T E R XII,

TO THE SAME,

I HAVE now to answer two of your dear letters, the one dated from Villaviziosa, the 2d of October, and the other the 16th; both filled with that just affliction which the present sorrowful situation of your court inspires, even at a distance.

The death of so admirable a Queen, and her royal consort oppressed with grief for so irreparable a loss, are objects for a disinterested servant, obliged, honoured, and full of affection and gratitude like yourself, that must inevitably plunge your mind in an abyss of desolation. I know not what to say to you, my dear friend, equal to what I feel

feel *for* you. Yet I have no doubt, but that you, who have shewn the world how capable you are of resisting the flattering smiles of fortune, will know how to support adversity; and that your prudence will not wait for the assistance of necessity, to manifest wisdom and christian resignation.

Your royal benefactress of glorious memory, knew your worth. Her testimony does honour to your disinterestedness, and her justice.

Monticelli died at Dresden, they say by an accident. *Requiescat !*

I am no performer on the harp, the instrument is too imperfect, and I envy no one who knows how to scatch it (*u*). Let me hear from you whenever you can, and to be assured if ever I loved you, it is now, when affection is inflamed by piety. Adieu, my dear Gemello,

Vienna, November, 1758.

(*u*) This severe censure of the harp, was made before the invention of pedals, and subsequent cultivation, had rendered it an instrument of such execution, that Metastasio, had he heard it played on by the admirable MADAME CRUMPHOLTZ, would have changed his satire into a panegyric.

This was a melancholy period of our bard's life. The losses which his Imperial Patrons frequently sustained in the conflict with the King of Prussia, must have afflicted as well as incommoded him ; and the mere narrations of the horrors of war, must at all times have *barrowed up the soul* of a being whose native disposition was benign and gentle. In 1757 and 1758, he wrote few letters and fewer poems : indeed the only verses of this time, which I find in his works, are the few lines which he addressed to the Empress Queen, on the victory at *Colin*.

In the early part of 1759, he addressed his friend Farinelli, on a subject which, it is to be feared, arrived at his knowledge at too inauspicious a time to produce the desired effect.

L E T T E R XIII.

TO THE CAVALIER FARINELLI.

IN spite of the violence of my nervous complaints, of a number of disagreeable employments, and the risk of teasing you, I am unable to resist the compassion which
our

our poor friend *Porpora* excited in me yesterday, when he entreated me to back the letter which I now enclose, with one from myself. It is a circumstance, my dear Gemello, sufficient to draw tears from every one possessed of humanity, to see a man of such merit in his profession, reduced to an *absolute want of daily bread*, by the well known misfortunes of Saxony, whence he derived a certain pension, sufficient, at least, for his subsistence. These are the only cases in which I feel the narrow limits of my fortune; as I am unable to find in all philosophy, any preservatives that can mitigate the pain of being useless to the unhappy.

He supposes that your compassionate sovereigns, from their munificence and charity, used to grant little pensions, under the title of Eleemosynaries, to persons in distress; and he entreats me to recommend him to your intercession, that he might obtain one which would just enable him to subsist, and this is not saying much.

It will be better explained by himself in his own letter, which I have not read; and to recommend him to my dear Gemello, is doing an injury to his good heart, of which

he has given, and daily gives, such numerous and honourable proofs.

We are bound by every duty to succour the poor *Porpora*: he is a man, and we are obliged to assist our fellow creatures: he is in want; he is of eminence, and a friend; he is old, and a small pittance will save him from perishing. Do you perform this meritorious work, my dearest Gemello, if possible. It belongs particularly to your department in benevolence, to assist a person well known to all Europe; it will justly encrease the fame of your generous, beneficent, and well respected character; and I shall be personally obliged to you, for saving me from the pain of beholding the wreck of a man whom we have esteemed from our early youth (x).

(x) PORPORA, though not the greatest composer of his time, was universally allowed to be the greatest *singing-master*. Farinelli had been his scholar, and they were in England together. Most of the great singers, male and female, of the first forty or fifty years of the present century, had been formed or finished by him. The late Electress Dowager of Saxony, who had advanced into the mysteries of the art of music, further than most professors, had been his scholar. Metastasio himself had been initiated into the vocal art, and into that of composition, as far as was necessary for a lyric poet, by *Porpora*; and even the admirable Dr. Haydn confesses obligations to him, early in life, during his residence at Vienna, in the art of singing.

Adieu,

Adieu, my dear Gemello. Do what your heart advises on this occasion.

If ever the evil spirit should call to your remembrance, any of *Porpora's* irregularities; forget not that the infirmities of the mind, merit equal compassion with those of the body: and though *Porpora* should not even deserve assistance, Farinelli deserves to be his benefactor.

Vienna, March 5, 1759.

L E T T E R XIV.

TO THE SAME.

YESTERDAY was delivered to me, your most welcome letter of the 2d of August, dated from Villaviziosa: and though tinged with the gloomy colour reflected from your painful situation, it was great consolation to me, to find, that, with your feeble state of health, you have had sufficient vigour to resist so tremendous a shock. The fatal news of your beneficent king, having been delivered from his sufferings, arrived at Vienna four days before your letter. It is to be hoped that the melancholy state in
 P 4 which

which he long remained without the least chance of recovery, diminished the violence of a blow which must have been expected, and which delivered a poor prince from the painful existence in which he languished. And yet, with all these solid reasons, I judge, my dear Gemello, by the emotions of my own heart, what yours must be ; but I promise myself much more from your virtue than mine; because the examples of moderation with which you have so long furnished the world in the midst of the most intoxicating smiles of fortune, give us assurances of your meeting her frowns with equal fortitude. Be of comfort, my dear Gemello : Inconstancy in human affairs, is the universal condition on which we live, as every mortal knows by woeful experience. No misfortune, however, can rob you of the praise of not suffering yourself to be seduced or dazzled by the blaze with which you were so long surrounded. Your true friends, and all good men, will for ever love and honour you for so uncommon a quality, and will be always attached to you ; but if there should be any one who thinks differently, it will be no disgrace, but an advantage to know and shun him.

I shall read your letter to our Archbishop. In the mean time, take care of your health : and be assured that I love you better than ever, and shall be always yours, whatever may happen to you.

P. S. The Jesuit fathers of this college, commission me by means of our Neapolitan father Cito, to thank you for the christian fervor with which they know you have pleaded their innocence at your court.

Vienna, September 1, 1759.

The death of Farinelli's royal Patron, Ferdinand the Sixth, king of Spain, so soon after he had lost his partial Patroness, the Queen, not only deprived him of his importance at that court, but seems to have bereaved him of all comfort during the rest of his days. The English were generally at war with Spain during the reign of this Prince; and justice is seldom done, by the natives of a rival nation, to the virtues of a Monarch with whom they are at variance. We heard of nothing but his imbecility, superstition, and partiality to our enemies. History, however, has treated him with more candour than the editors of English news papers, and allows,

allows, that he began his reign by acts of beneficence. He liberated prisoners, pardoned smugglers, and deserters, and appropriated two days in the week to hear the complaints, and redress the grievances of his subjects. He took part in the war of 1741, and, at the peace of Aix la Chapelle in 1748, procured for one of his brothers the crown of the two Sicilies, and for another the Duchies of Parma and Placentia. He availed himself of the short peace, to reform the abuses of his government, and to protect arts, commerce, and agriculture. By his encouragement, manufactures of all kinds began to flourish, and the Spaniards now saw, for the first time, the original materials and productions of their own country, worked at home, into useful and ornamented productions of labour and ingenuity, for which they used to be tributary to the industry of other nations.

About this time, a correspondence seems to have been revived between Metastasio and *Count Florio*, who sent him some of his poetical compositions. Though this is the first letter that has been preserved of the correspondence, the Count seems to have been an old acquaintance; and a confidential intercourse

tercourse between them, was continued for sixteen years after the date of the following letter.

L E T T E R X V .

TO COUNT DANIEL FLORIO OF UDINE.

AMONG the many agreeable consequences of the triumph of our wise and valiant Marshal Daun, the most interesting, to me, has been the opportunity it has afforded my most worthy Count Florio, of ornamenting the Italian Parnassus with his most elegant compositions, and honouring me with his letters. None of your productions had come to my hands till the receipt of your last letter, except the sonnet addressed to the Ghost of *Schwerin*: and this had very much occupied my mind, with its lively and poetical images, and with the dignity of the thoughts and expressions; particularly in the first triplet, which, in my opinion, is the first in excellence, though its brethren are very beautiful. I was not only ignorant of the existence of these poems, till the arrival of your letter, but even afterwards, quite at a loss where to find them. I had recourse, how-
ever,

ever, to foreign booksellers who have at length put me in possession of them. I found, in a small collection, your most beautiful ode, accompanied by five sonnets; and in a still smaller, three sonnets only, among which is that on the mystery of the *Rod* and the *Ark*, with two others which I am not certain are derived from the same source. But they merit it at least. The inclosed note will inform you of the contents of the two collections, and the beginning of each piece.

I am proud of the public opinion of the cultivated talents of my dear Count Florio, who has perfectly verified my predictions of him many years ago: and I not only congratulate myself and you, but Italy, on your success.

My sonnet has no other merit, than the truth with which it tries to defeat the malignity of those who wished to ascribe the victory to a miracle, in order to diminish the merit of the victor. Indeed the sonnet is not my province: I lie down very unwillingly on that bed of *Procurstes*: and it is a miracle, when I rise from it with whole bones. Believe me to be with the most constant esteem and respect, &c.

Vienna, August 17, 1757.

The

The sonnet by Metastasio, alluded to in this letter, is the following, addressed to the Empress Queen. It was written on the victory obtained at *Colin*, in Bohemia, by the Austrian army, under the command of Marshal Count Daun, June 18, 1757.

ALL' AUGUSTISSIMA

IMPERATRICE REGINA.

SONETTO.

*Oh qual, Teresa, al suo splendor natò
Nuovo aggiunge splendore oggi il tuo Nome!
Ecco a seconda del comun desìo
Le orgogliose falangi oppresse, e dome.*

*Di guerra il nembo impetuoso, e rio
Sveller pareva gli allori alle tue chiome:
Tu in Dio fidasti; Augusta Donna; e Dio
In favor tuo si dichiarò: ma come?*

*Il Sol non Sarrestò nel gran cimento:
Il mar non si divise: il suo favore
Non costò alla natura alcun portento.*

*Il Sonno, la Costanza, ed il Valore
Fur suoi ministri; e dell' illustre evento
Ti diè il vantaggio, e ti lasciò l'onore.*

SON-

SONNET,

TO THE EMPRESS QUEEN.

Ah great Theresa, what new glories flow
 To grace the native splendor of thy name !
 See the proud Phalanx of the common foe
 Subdu'd and scatter'd to enhance thy fame !

The cloud of war, big with impending ills,
 Threaten'd to blast each laurel on thy brow;
 Thy trust was plac'd in God, who gracious wills
 Protection to thy state—should man ask, how?

The sun was not impeded in his course;
 Nor did the great abyfs become dry land:
 The work was done by human skill and force,
 Without one Portent from the Almighty hand;

Wisdom and fortitude, with valour join'd,
 The fate of this tremendous day decree;
 These Ministers the way to victory find,
 And leave the honour of th' event to Thee.

L E T T E R XVI.

TO COUNT FLORIO.

You must already, my dear Sir, have received a full account from our friend the
 ABATE FREDDI, of the execution of the
 com-

commissions with which you honoured me; so that to speak further on the subject is useless. I congratulate you on the constant and happy fecundity of your muses, who instead of diminishing in vigour, acquire new strength every day. It has afforded me very great pleasure to find, that the few persons here who are capable of producing works of genius, do justice to your talents: particularly, our most worthy Nuncio, who yesterday contended with me, who could bestow the highest praise on your poem upon *Providence*; which truly abounds with learning, genius, and all the charms of the most beautiful poetry. Take care of your health, for the sake of the Italian Parnassus, and believe me, &c.

Vienna, October 22, 1757.

L E T T E R XVII.

TO THE SAME.

THE confidence, my dear Count, which you have placed in my friendship, gives me the greatest pleasure. I find by your last most obliging letter, that you know me sufficiently not to blame my inability to comply with

your reasonable request. I am obliged from system, temper, want of health, and inexperience in the management of every thing that relates to business; to live philosophically by myself: I never go to court, unless commanded by my sovereign; and never mix with the shining satellites of our stars of the first magnitude, unless by accident. In consequence of this kind of life, whenever any thing that is disagreeable to me happens, I endeavour to bear it as well as I can, without the hope of assistance from others. In fact, during the course of the present war, I have lost two thousand two hundred florins, which I had lent; and have not only had my pension reduced, twelve per cent, but been obliged to receive it in paper; which will not be taken in payment, unless at a loss of another twelve per cent, at least. Add to all this, the numerous new taxes, which are daily imposed on us here; and judge whether such burthens are not too heavy for the shoulders of a poor poet. But notwithstanding all these grievances, being most certain that perturbation and complaint would have no effect on the system already established, I spare myself such useless labour; *demitto a-*
riculas

*riculas tanquam iniquæ mentis asellus**. I obey, and recommend myself to providence. But if you could find any one at Vienna more able and more active than me, I am of opinion, that in the present situation of affairs, it would not be possible to obtain attention to small private grievances; and that all the redress you could get, would be the referring you to an examination of the deputies at *Goritz* and *Gradisca*. At these places, and not at Vienna, you should therefore shew the validity of your reasons. It is in vain to flatter yourself that the bare assertions of an individual can overset the dispositions of an entire deputation. You see that I have a fellow-feeling for you, and beg you to believe, that I am extremely mortified at my insufficiency.

Vienna, Sept. 22, 1759.

* Like vicious Asps, that fretting bears
A wicked load, I hang my ears.

FRANCIS'S HOR. LIB. 1. SAT. 9.

L E T T E R XVIII.

TO THE SAME.

It appears by your letter, that the system of life which I love and have thought necessary to adopt, does not meet with your approbation. But before you peremptorily decide, I must beg of you, my dear Count, to remember, that you are here only in the pit of the theatre where I spend my time ; and that your situation prevents you from seeing all that passes on the stage, and behind the scenes : so that you cannot depend on the solidity of that reasoning which has only an illusion for its basis. After this, take into the account my natural genius, which from infancy has inclined me to the love of a small society, and the fear of crowds and noise, those enemies of the Muses, among whom it has been my lot to pass my days. Add to all this, that from the time of my first arrival here, I have been convinced that our poetry only pleases when it is seasoned with music, and interpreted by action : so that all the beautiful images, happy expressions, elegance

gance of elocution, harmonical charms of our versification, and other lyrical excellences, are generally unknown here, and consequently never appreciated, unless by a few judicious foreigners (*y*). You may therefore have observed, that during thirty years constant residence in this country, I have suffered all the important events of this period to remain unsung; nor have I ever tuned my Lyre, except in the single instance of the sonnet for the first victory that was gained by Marshal Daun, which I could not decline without incivility, as the task was recommended, in caprice, by a great person, who thought he was obliging me by the commission. The being useful to my brethren, would be the most likely motive to make me change my system; but you must not imagine it to be a very easy operation to do it effectually. I am ignorant of more than half the necessary ingredients in this recipe, and I abhor the rest: so that if I have not succeeded in serving others by my own *nugæ conoræ*, I fear that I shall go out of the world without fulfilling this first duty.

Vienna, February 13, 1760.

(*y*) It is to be feared, that this, at the Italian Opera, is nearly the case in England.

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L E T-

LETTER XIX.

TO SIG. FILIPPONI.

BESIDES the new dramas, for which I beg you to accept my thanks, I am indebted to you for the account which you have given me of your health, and that of your family; as every thing concerning such an old and affectionate friend is extremely interesting to me. This tender sollicitude occasions frequent trouble to our worthy friend, Count Canale, when much time has elapsed without hearing from you, as was the case before the arrival of your last letter.

I am very glad that your poet, Sig. *Cigna Santi* of Turin, has been able to succeed in making the subject of *Æneas in Latium*, theatrical. I have had it in my mind more than thirty years; and yet, though I often tried, I have never been able to see it in a point of view that satisfied me. If ever I should be lucky enough to discover its theatrical properties, I should perhaps still be induced to work at it, for the sake of *Dido*.

Take care of your health, my dear friend, and advance in the road through life as we all do, hoping for good, and bearing the bad. Reverence devoutly, in my name, Signor *Bruni*; and believe me to be as much yours, as an old and faithful servant ought to be.

Vienna, February 27, 1760.

LETTER XX.

TO THE SAME.

THE approbation which, according to your letter of the 25th of last month, has been granted to my *ALCIDE AL RIVIO*, by your enlightened court and intelligent public, is sweet flattery. Of your favourable opinion I had no doubt; being certain, that whatever was mine, would be honoured with your ancient propensity to protect it; which pleases me more as a proof of the continuance of your love, than rigid and incorruptible judgment. The most dangerous rock of this composition, was the rugged and severe morality that the subject required, to contrast with the delicate and seducing sentiments which must inevitably reign in it. On this account, I was obliged to call in all

the flowers of poetry, and illusions of representation, and shew, to disguise it. Here the artifice has happily succeeded; and the public has run after this moral entertainment in greater crowds, at every representation, than at any other opera full of events and passions. This is perhaps more a panegyric on the nation, than the author; but at least it is no disgrace, that my vanity should have such a hook to catch at (z).

Vienna, November 24, 1760.

LETTER XXI.

TO COUNT DANIEL FLORIO.

IN expectation of our *Abate Freddi*, I have deferred writing to you in answer to your obliging letter of the 20th of July, for

(z) This opera, written for the marriage of the Archduke Joseph, late Emperor, with the Princess Isabel of Bourbon, was the first which Metastasio produced expressly for the court of Vienna, since the death of the Emperor, Charles VI. It was set by Haffé, who, with the whole celebrated band of Augustus II. King of Poland, had quitted Dresden, on the King of Prussia's taking possession of it, in 1756.

more

more than a fortnight : but as he has not yet made his appearance, and fearing that the delay should have an appearance of neglect, I can no longer postpone informing you of my impatience to read and admire your new poem, which I have no doubt will be worthy of you ; and thanking you, most gratefully, for the honour you do me in imagining that I interest myself in your fame, and in that of our Parnassus, which are so closely connected. Indeed I have wished a thousand times to animate you to undertake some heroic poem ; not knowing, among our present bards, any other who would have breath sufficient to fill the epic trumpet, and bid defiance to the most celebrated and sonorous champions. It is time that you should vanquish your excessive modesty, and launch into a wider ocean. I will be answerable for your making new and glorious discoveries, and for the rich and valuable merchandize with which you will be freighted at your return. I should utter a thousand imprecations against the obstacles which prevent your sailing, if they were less sacred and less reasonable. The inexpressible pleasure of embracing you would be too dearly purchased, by the uneasiness which your good

heart would suffer, in being separated from so worthy a companion. I wish myself this happiness, without its being embittered by circumstances which may throw the least shade on the perfect idea which I have formed of your character.

You may be certain, my dear Sir, that the enlightened Italians resident here, are your partial admirers; but good God! how small is their number! I hardly believe they would exceed the number of the graces; but am certain that they would not amount to that of the muses,

Vienna, August 20, 1760.

END OF THE FOURTH SECTION.

SECTION V,

LETTER I.

TO THE CAVALIER FARINELLI IN ITALY,

AT length I can no longer doubt, my dear Gemello, of your being a sea monster. Till now I imagined that the numerous letters I had sent to you into Spain, by the common post, and by Count Rosenburgh, had miscarried, and flattered myself that this was the reason of my not hearing from you. At present, I hear from all quarters, that you are in Italy, and thank God, in good health; and yet, notwithstanding this, I have not been remembered by you. I can conceive that the agitation occasioned by so great a crisis in your affairs, and way of life, may have occupied you so much as to allow you no time for thinking of all your numerous friends; but I hoped that you reckoned me among the few who would be always attached

tached to you in whatever situation the vicissitudes of fortune may throw you. However your affairs have hitherto gone, or may go, I entreat you to settle some plan for our future correspondence; let me know, instantly, how you do, and how I stand in your thoughts: or if this is incompatible with your present plan, at least remember, whenever you shall chuse to enquire after me, that you will find me impressed at all times, and on all occasions with the same esteem, the same friendship, and the same affection as ever.

Vienna, July 31, 1760.

L E T T E R II.

TO THE SAME.

THE satisfaction which you expressed in your dear letter of the 21st of last month, afforded me great consolation, as I deduced from it the affectionate disposition of your good heart towards me. And I can only say in return, that you have the entire possession of mine, in the same manner as you always possessed it.

My

My nose, from which every tribute of gratitude is due, insists on my thanking you for your affectionate attention to its gratification. Our dear and honoured *Carlani*, who reverences and worships you, has undertaken, at my request, to regulate with the assistance of his cousin, the importation of snuff: so that I now hope it will have an auspicious passage hither.

I have inclosed a letter from our secretary of state, and hope it will arrive safe at the place of its destination.

Your Pilgrimage to the holy chapel (at *Loretta*) pleases me, but I cannot dissemble to you my inability to say the same of your expression—*and then go on*. I quite understand your grateful and respectful motives; but am not certain that I comprehend the rest. I comfort myself in knowing that you are prudent, have friends, and are sure to do nothing rashly.

You will forgive the anxiety and solicitude of your affectionate and sincere friend.

Vicenza, November 3, 1760.

L E T.

L E T T E R III.

TO THE SAME.

YOUR most welcome letter of the 19th of last month, has afforded me great consolation, both by the new proofs of your affection, and the laudable gratitude which you seem to express at the universal love and affection with which you have been received, and will doubtless continue to enjoy, in the bosom of your numerous and tender family. Indeed my pleasure would be perfect, if you could assure me that you were become more robust in body, and more philosophic in mind. Try, my dear Gemello, at these two most important points ; that the premium of your honourable and wise conduct, may correspond with that which has rendered you illustrious in felicity, when it was much more difficult to preserve an equilibrium.

Oh that I were allowed to make a third in the long conversation, which I figure to myself, between you and our most worthy Princess of Belmonte ! But these are dreams and fables which produce nothing but mortification,

tification, at the impossibility of realizing them.

Our honoured *Carlani* set off, suddenly, the first day of lent, to my great affliction.

From a wandering planet, I hope you will soon become a fixed star. When that happens, pray inform me of your sphere, that I may know where to point my telescope (*a*).

Adieu. Take care of your health, and continue to love your most faithful friend and twin.

P. S. The most excellent snuff, which will be the delight of mine and of many noses, ready to sound your praises, is arrived. I shall carry your compliments to our sacred Pastor. Adieu, once more.

Vienna, February 9, 1761.

(*a*), This beautiful metaphor in playful prose, had been still more beautifully expressed in verse, by our Southern, in his *Oroonoko*; which it is very improbable that Metastasio, who did not understand English, should ever have seen.

"Thou God adored! Though ever glorious Sun!

"If she be yet on earth, send me a beam

"Of thy all seeing pow'r to light me to her;

"Or if thy sister goddess has preferr'd

"Her beauty to the skies, to be a star,

"Oh tell me where she shines, that I may stand

"Whole nights and gaze upon her."

LET-

L E T T E R I V.

TO THE SAME, IN BOLOGNA.

YOUR dear letter, of the 17th of July, was only delivered to me three days ago : so that my incomparable Gemello will perceive by the date of this, that it has been near a month on the road : Heaven knows by what wicked contrivances so much time has been lost. It is well for us, that our affairs will not be injured by this delay, and that my chief sollicitude, which was about your health, had been already appeased from another quarter. Though I shall not obtain the pleasure of seeing and embracing you : yet it is some consolation to me, that we are not quite so far from each other : and to make me perfectly easy on your account, I long to receive some letters from you, in which I shall discover none of those manifest indications of a mind that has not yet quite recovered its tranquillity. I should certainly have condemned you, had you been insensible to such an unexpected and afflicting catastrophe. Every excess is an excess ; but
that

that which arises from gratitude, merits not only pity but praise. And yet, my dear Gemello, you have already superabundantly given way to the emotions of your feeling heart, and the laws of duty : it is now time to put in practice that serene resignation which enabled you, in the face of the whole world, to give so many wonderful proofs of heroic moderation, amidst the most seducing flattery of fortune (*b*). Accomplish this, my dear friend. Settle your domestic affairs, a work which you say you have begun ; and establish a placid, wise and serene tenor of life, in which you may sweetly pass all those days which providence has allotted you, in pleasing occupations among your friends who adore you. Forgive my affection these, perhaps too familiar, remonstrances. The privilege of a twin will I hope authorise such liberties : and it is very excusable that I should wish you liberated from such agita-

(*b*) Metastasio, by his frequent repetition of this encomium, seems desirous of stimulating his friend to that fortitude of which he now so much stood in need ; having not only been bereaved of his royal Patrons, but driven from that court in which he had been treated with such distinction, and severed from those friendships and habits, which he had enjoyed more than twenty years.

tions as true friendship obliges me to participate with you.

Our good Princess of Belmonte has frequently written to me, and magnifies the pleasure which she enjoyed in your company; and the esteem for you which your amiable character and conversation had encreased and confirmed. I envied you both : but we are not born to be perfectly happy.

Our sacred Pastor is always in motion, and catching him is not the feat of a common sportsman. He is at present in the country; but I shall contrive, at his return, to execute your commission.

I am well in *quantum Metastasiana fragilitas patitur*. I should be much better if I were assured of your tranquillity : and if I could convince you of the constant affection with which I shall eternally be, &c.

Vienna, August 19, 1761.

LETTER V.

TO COUNT FLORIO.

THE light, but frequent, commands of my court, rich in eight or nine angelic Archdutchesses, all lovers of song, added to the
irregularity

irregularity of my health, often make me seem to neglect the very persons with whom I am most ambitious of being in constant correspondence. From this cause, my most respected Count, is derived the slowness in answering your letter, for which I rather claim compassion than pardon, as it is more my misfortune than fault. The great work which you have undertaken, will not bear precipitation. Great travellers do not ride post. In spite of my impatience, I cannot help approving the wise and well ordered leisure with which you proceed in your glorious enterprise. Move slow, but never discontinue your labour, and I am certain that you will add new splendor to our Italian muses.

Vienna, September, 1760.

L E T T E R VI.

TO THE SAME.

IN the last most obliging letter with which you have been pleased to favour me, all the enviable qualities of your good heart are clearly discoverable; these it is impossible for any one to deny, without injustice, and

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who

who wishes not to injure his own character. I congratulate you on this amiable disposition, as an excellence extremely rare in these times, especially among persons in that elevated rank of literature to which your cultivation and talents have so justly exalted you. Continue, dear Sir, to gratify my wishes, in honouring the Italian Parnassus; and as one of its most ancient inhabitants, I shall think myself obliged to you for that splendor which will be reflected by your works, upon all our numerous tribe in common. I am unable to tell you what regret you have left in all those who, during your short residence at this court, had the happiness of enjoying your amiable and learned company.

I am extremely impatient to hear that all Italy echoes your heroic trumpet—

Vienna, January 10, 1761.

Metafasio seems, by his prudence, good breeding, and candour, to have been the only poet, of the first class, in modern times, who enjoyed a long peace with his brethren. The lives of Dryden, Boileau, Pope, and Voltaire, were embittered by perpetual quarrels
with

with rival authors ; who though not all dunces, were treated as such, indiscriminately, by these impatient and irritable favourites of Apollo. Metastasio, indeed, was seldom attacked ; but if he had intemperately answered the few whose envy he had excited, his foes would have been multiplied, and he would have been regarded by his competitors as their common enemy : as his superior excellence was certainly injurious both to their fame and fortune ; but by forbearance, urbanity, and a politeness which bordered upon flattery to those who sent him their works, or consulted him as a critic, he escaped all that warfare, which though usually generated by envy, if not fostered by arrogance and a vindictive spirit, would die in its infancy.

The civility between authors in private letters, is no more to be understood literally, than the humility of the great, when they say to a tradesman : “ Your humble servant, Sir.” Metastasio, fond of quiet, and unwilling to disquiet others, when consulted by authors, which from his great celebrity frequently happened, treated them with such candour and lenity, as were construed into approbation ; all, indeed, that consulting authors

usually want. Whether this was the case of the writer to whom the two following letters are addressed, I know not ; but his merit must have been very great, or his modesty little, if he was not flattered by their contents.

LETTER VII.

TO SIG. MARIO COMPAGNONI.

YOUR most obliging letter of the 8th of last month, with which I was unexpectedly honoured, gives me so advantageous and amiable an idea both of your disposition and cultivated talents, that the pleasure I feel at the acquisition of so valuable a friend, leaves me no time for remorse, at having usurped such excessive esteem and benevolence.

I find in your prose as well as verse, besides the elegance and felicity of your style, that uncommon choice and connexion of ideas, in which even writers the most celebrated, seldom abound. This can only be the child of that perfect judgment which seems symbolized in Apollo, as talents are
in

in the muses: and I am firmly persuaded, that nothing great can be produced by the latter, without the masterly guidance of the former. Upon such a solid foundation, I build my hopes, that you will soon become a new ornament to the literature of Italy; and I feel as much vanity as gratitude in having been the subject, however barren, of your first poetical essays.

Vienna, January 3, 1760.

L E T T E R VIII.

TO THE SAME.

I ALWAYS feel delighted and honoured by your letters, particularly when some new composition flatters my vanity in fulfilling my predictions, and germinating fresh hopes of your future poetical fame.

The beautiful cantata which you have written on the night of our Saviour's birth, is the more worthy of praise, for partaking less of the disadvantage of a subject so frequently treated. The language is flowing, without losing its dignity. The images are pleasing and poetical, and there reigns

R. 3

through

through the whole, a judgment, without which, as I said in a former letter, I set little value on the admirable faculties of the most happy talents. I congratulate you sincerely on your success, and exhort you to continue to delight in the commerce of the muses, who smile on you with so much partiality.

Vienna, February 13, 1761.

Metastasio seems to manifest some displeasure at the public use which a writer mentioned in the following letter, had made of the politeness with which he had treated him in a private correspondence.

LETTER IX.

TO SIG. FILIPPONI.

TESTIMONIES of the constant friendship of my much loved Sig. Filipponi, are always, extremely dear to me; for my esteem and affection for him, being constantly alive, and present to my mind, the proofs which I receive of such a kind return, cannot be indifferent to me.

What

What *cacoethes* could have stimulated the author of *Almeria* to publish my letter concerning his drama, and the dedication to it, in spite of my most serious remonstrance that he would suppress so diabolical a temptation, I know not. That you may not suppose, for a moment, that I should be delighted with such incense, I inclose the copy of a letter which I wrote to the author, to dissuade him from any such design; but you see that I have no reason to be flattered with the efficacy of my eloquence.

TO SIG. COLTELLINI AT LEGHORN.

FROM the great hopes which your happy talents had inspired, in the perusal of some of your beautiful poems, particularly the last, written on the Nuptials of our Arch Duke, I rejoice to find that you have so far subdued your diffidence, as to put on the buskin, and try to add fresh ornaments to our theatre. The sea is certainly stormy and difficult; but as far as we may venture to predict of that dexterity and intelligence which has not hitherto ventured to quit the shore, you seem in possession of all that is necessary for the

enterprize; and I am impatient to join my approbation to that of the public; but if it was the premium for a dedication, it would too much diminish its value. Such a species of incense does not belong to a commerce among the inhabitants of Parnassus, and by immemorable prescription, is only due to the splendid sons of fortune with whom I never have had, nor am ambitious of having, any affinity. I confess myself much obliged by your partiality, but it would be extremely injudicious, if you began your career with the bad auspices of a useless, or rather, a hurtful irregularity. Abandon therefore this idea, and afford me a fitter opportunity of publicly declaring myself your panegyrist, as I already have done in private. *

Vienna, March 9, 1761.

Present a thousand compliments in my name to the learned advocate *Bruni*; and add, that neither *Count Canale* nor myself have waited for a stimulus to forward the sale of his golden book; but we are too much confirmed in our former opinion, that this soil is not favourable to literature. Of six copies which *Count Canale* sent for, none

* Thus far was addressed to Sig. Coltellini, what follows is the conclusion of the bard's letter to Sig. Filipponi.
are

are disposed of, except those which he presented to his friends; and two copies, which I left on return in the hands of an eminent bookseller, in spite of all our preaching, remain very quietly on the counter. If they were French romances for the improvement of the minds, and mending the morals of our young gentlemen and ladies, they would have enriched the bookseller. What a happy age!

Vienna, August 17, 1761.

TO MONSIEUR BELLOY.

I HOPE, Sir, that you will not ascribe the late arrival of my answer to your most obliging letter, and thanks for your courteous present of *Titus*, either to neglect or want of esteem. The frequent poetical commissions of our court, rich with most amiable and accomplished princesses, all lovers of music; the necessity of frequent perusals of the drama with which I have been favoured, previous to the answering your letter; and the great uncertainty of my health, have deprived me of that leisure which I wished to dedicate to genius and friendship. Stimulated
more

more by duty than convenience, I now steal a few moments from my unimportant, though inevitable, avocations.

As there was a necessity for accomodating yourself to the genius of your nation, in treating the subject of *Titus* so differently from me, it is a matter of pure generosity in you to ascribe to me any part of the merit of a tragedy which, in your hands, is become original. Painters would almost all become copyists, if this title were given to every one who was not the first to paint the death of Abel, the sacrifice of Abraham, or any other event. Incidents, similarity of sentiment, and human passions, are in common, and resemble each other like our minds, which are the more apt to think alike, in proportion to their being natural. And, with the assistance of leisure and pedantry, I could adduce an infinite number of examples of the greatest ancient and modern poets, who, under similar circumstances, have been obliged to use the same thoughts and expressions. This truth will render me unworthy of the second praise which you have been so obliging as to bestow upon me, of having ingeniously, and with wonderful art, adapted French tragedies to the Italian stage; at least I can venture

to

to say with truth, that this is what I never intended. Having perused the best dramatic productions of other countries, I always meant to write originally. And if the circumscribed condition of our natures, or a memory, too faithful in retaining such things as it had received with admiration and pleasure, has suggested to me beauties which I had read before upon similar occasions ; supposing I was the inventor of them, I had taken the credit to myself : and whenever I have discovered the contrary, I thought there was some merit in the selection and use of the precious materials which the most illustrious miners had supplied, and I should have been ashamed of my weakness, if I had been induced to relinquish the best, for the childish vanity of inventing something different.

But this digression is already too long for a letter hastily written, and for that reason I shall exercise your patience no further on the subject.

I therefore proceed to tell you, that I have read your tragedy several times, and always with equal pleasure. The style is so harmonious, noble, clear, and full of uncommon thoughts, as convince me, that the bounty of nature has been happily seconded by application

cation and study. You should not therefore, with such a rich capital, give way to the capricious insults of theatrical vicissitudes. You cannot be ignorant that the same tempests have in every age agitated the first luminaries of dramatic poetry ; but the storm ceases, while merit remains, and is rendered more bright and illustrious by time (*b*). I take
a part

(*b*) This translated and unsuccessful drama, was the author's first attempt. It was brought on the stage at Paris, in 1758. The *Seige of Calais* in 1765, seems to have been the only one of Belloy's tragedies, that was crowned with full and unequivocal success. The King of France honoured him with a gold medal, weighing twenty-five Louis d'or, besides a considerable present, in money. The magistrates of Calais, sent him the freedom of their town, in a gold box ; and placed his picture in the town hall, among their benefactors. Such testimonies of gratitude, were due to a poet who, by a national and historical event, had the power to awaken such unbounded patriotic enthusiasm, in spite of the incorrect and harsh versification and bombast, of which his countrymen in their cooler moments, have accused him. But notwithstanding his defects, justice ought to be rendered to the bold and impassioned strokes, the noble and generous sentiments, and pathetic situations, which contributed to the extraordinary success of *the Seige of Calais*.

With respect to his failure, in imitating *La Clemenza di Tito* of Metastasio, a drama for music, and a drama for declamation, are such different things, that a good *opera*, without

a part, however, in your just complaints. Indeed the partiality which you profess for me, your distinguished talents, and the similitude of the risk we run in sailing on the same sea, renders it a duty ; but I wish that the obstacles which you encounter, as generally happens to great minds, may accelerate, not impede, your progress.

With respect to the incidents and conduct of our tragedy, I have only to say, that if I had imagined any other would have been more likely to satisfy the genius of my nation, I should certainly have preferred it to that which I adopted : so that it is clear I saw no further. You have doubtless had the same end in deviating from me : that is, of flattering the French taste. I know that your genius and theatrical experience ought to

out many changes and additions, will always be a bad tragedy ; and the most excellent tragedy, without compression, an insupportable opera. In tragedy, amplification is not only allowable, but necessary to display the powers of poetry and eloquence, as well as to discriminate characters, and paint passion. In an opera, the narrative must be short, the incidents numerous and rapid in succession, the diction rather sweet and flowing, than strong and nervous : as the words of an air should merely serve as an outline for melody to colour.

have enabled you to judge (*c*); but it would have been too arrogant in me, who am ignorant of the customs, prejudices, and way of thinking of your countrymen, to dare to propose my own. It is extremely false; that a young German officer ever sent, or shewed me as his own, the sketch of your tragedy of *Titus*. I am acquainted with no officer of this nation, who writes French verse. So that those who have irritated you by such a fable, have either done it through mistake, or malice. Be not therefore disturbed by phantoms which have no existence; but courageously continue to make use of your talents, and of the solid and noble style to which you are naturally prone; and I have no doubt, but that you will add to your nation's glory, and acquire those laurels which I have predicted, and of which I sincerely wish you in possession.

Vienna, April 30, 1761.

(*c*) Belloy began his dramatic career by being an actor.

L E T-

L E T T E R X.

TO FATHER JOHN BAPTIST MARTINI,
MAESTRO DI CAPELLA.

YOUR extreme readiness to oblige, reverend Sir, corresponds with the other admirable qualities by which you are so much distinguished. The young female composer, who sent you some specimens of her studies, was only ambitious of your corrections and advice; but you have been pleased to honour her with your approbation and praise. They will however inspire her with an ardent wish to merit them in future, in availing herself of the masterly notes which you have so kindly sent her for guides; and which sufficiently shew, that the author of them has been able to unite, in a most uncommon manner, profound science with humanity and grace (*d*).

When

(*d*) This female student, who had sent her compositions to *Padre Martini*, was the accomplished *Mademoiselle Martinetz*, the daughter of a friend of *Metastasio*, in whose house he resided from his first arrival at Vienna, till his death.

When you kindly honour me with the precious gift of the first volume of your history of music, be pleased to consign it to the care of our worthy and amiable friend *Sig. Carlani*, whom I have requested to transmit it to me by the first favourable opportunity. In the mean time, I entreat you to honour me with your commands, and to believe me to be, with due respect and gratitude, &c.

Vienna, March 9, 1761.

death. She had been educated by the Poet, and her virtues and talents, in riper years, amply rewarded the pains which her illustrious tutor had taken in cultivating them. See *Germ. Tour.* Vol. 1. Article Vienna.

The admirable *Dr. Haydn*, in the beginning of his career, and previous to his great celebrity, was the music-master of *Mademoiselle Martinetz*, residing, during three years, under the same roof as *Metastasio*, from whom this great musician himself received instructions in the Italian language, and the adapting melody to its accents. It was about this time, that he obtained a few lessons in singing from the celebrated *Porpora*: in whose favour *Metastasio* wrote so eloquent and pathetic a petition to *Farinelli*. See Letter XIII. Sect. IV. of this vol.

LET-

L E T T E R X I .

TO THE SAME.

I DID not answer your last most obliging letter, till I had made enquiry after the musical manuscripts in the Imperial library. Yesterday I received an account of them, which to-day I religiously inclose.

I have written no other drama for the nuptials of our arch-duke, than *Alcide al Bivio*. There is now performing, a serenata intitled *Thetis*, written by *Sig. Migliavacca*, a poet in the service of the King of Poland, which has great merit. In the course of the carnival, will be performed in the public theatre, a little opera called *Armida*, imitated from the French, and from my *Iffipile*, by the same poet. My *Alcide* therefore, with *Tetide* and *Armida*, will be delivered to you by the courier of *Count Alberti*, who sets off in a few days for Florence, and will then pass on to Bologna.

I am impatient to admire your book; though, as I have not been initiated in the mysteries of harmony, or at least but slightly,

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I shall

I shall judge of it as a blind man does of colours.

My avocations will not allow me to lengthen this letter: I therefore hasten to present to you, the respects of our female composer, who animated by your approbation, works incessantly at her maſs, and beg you to believe me to be, with the highest and most perfect esteem, &c.

Vienna, May 4, 1761.

LETTER XII.

TO THE SAME.

THE baggage of the Duke of *St. Elizabeth* being at length arrived, yesterday I was put in possession of the first volume of your history of music, which you have so obligingly sent me. I hastily, and with avidity, ran over the dedication, preface, and some of the first chapters, and thus far can congratulate myself with the author, having been highly pleased with the idea of the enterprise, the style, and the rich erudition with which the book must necessarily abound; but I very much fear that you will soon
plunge

plunge so deep into science, that I, poor profane mortal, not instructed in the harmonical arcana, shall for my sins be in Egyptian darkness, and equally incapable of being pleased, or of judging. Notwithstanding this danger, I shall ardently proceed in the perusal, as I have long been daily accustomed to meet with many things of which I am utterly ignorant. In the mean time, I beg of you to accept of my most grateful thanks for so precious a gift, and wishing I may ever be able to make a sufficient return, I remain, &c.

Vienna, July 17, 1761.

L E T T E R XIII.

TO SIG. FILIPPONI.

IN the midst of the hurry and tumult of producing a new and premature drama, I cannot forget my dear *Filipponi*. The opera was hardly out of the press, ere I folded a copy of it, in a sheet of paper ornamented with your name, and consigned it to our good *Count Canale*, who assured me that he should find a speedy conveyance for it. I

was glad of this expedient, as our post-office exacts 11 *paoli* for the carriage of a single copy; a sum which becomes too enormous for a poor poet to sustain, particularly in time of war, when multiplied by a numerous correspondence. My letter would be longer, but I am so deeply in debt to other friends, that I must conclude with a hasty embrace.

Vienna, May 10, 1762.

L E T T E R XIV.

TO THE SAME.

WHETHER my CLELIA was handsome or ugly, I reckoned myself sure of your favour, by right of prescription, and was much pleased with your praises, as a certain indication of your obstinate affection for the fire; a possession which I eagerly wish to have confirmed, even in the midst of security (*e*).

(*e*) The opera of CLELIA was written by command, and first represented at the court of Vienna, before their Imperial majesties, on the birth day of her serene Royal Highness, the Arch-duchess Isabella of Bourbon, in 1762; it was set to music by Haffé. This princess died of the small-pox, the year after.

I must,

I must, however, confess to you, my dear friend, that toying with the muses at present, is very fatiguing, and dries up all my radical moisture. I want patience to bear with their caprice, and am not very greedy of their favours. Almost ten volumes of nonsense, ought to be a sufficient dose for an honest man. My buskins are worn out; others will come with new trappings to awaken the appetite of drowsy readers. *Signor Pugnani* called upon me on his arrival at Vienna, but I was not so fortunate as to see him; nor did I know of his departure. *Count Canale* must have been equally ignorant of it, for having the same wish as myself, of transmitting *Clelia* to you, he has been, like me, obliged to send it by the common carrier.

Vienna, July 19, 1762.

L E T T E R X V .

TO THE SAME.

FROM your most grateful letter of last month, I have a new confirmation of the affectionate part which you always take in

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every

every thing that concerns me. I am extremely obliged to you for the steps which you have already taken, that *Sig. Bartoli* may not expose me, by excessive partiality, to the risk of passing for a satirical poet, and with persons of high rank, to whom only the characters of tragedy can bear any resemblance. Men are men in every station; and yet the most cautious writers are in perpetual danger of offending, by a casual likeness in some unhappy feature, without the least intention of making his character the portrait of an individual. I should however be extremely sorry if *Sig. Bartoli*, not convinced of the solidity of my reasoning, should be angry at my not being sensible of the honour intended me; an accusation which would afflict me the more, as I feel myself less deserving of it. You will therefore do me a most essential service, if you can prevent me from splitting upon this rock; while I try to steer clear of the other.

The muses, whether willingly or unwillingly, have supplied my wants, and I have already sent them back to Parnassus, to obtain a new benediction from father Apollo. I must not at present tell you, what obliges me to have further dealings with these harlots,

lots, having been enjoined silence by a sovereign command; when my mouth shall be opened, you will know more.

Vienna, October 14, 1762.

LETTER XVI.

TO THE SAME.

You were exact, my dear friend, in forgetting when you wrote last, that my new opera had not yet been represented. The actresses are too great personages, and for that reason more exposed to accidents. We are overfet by them already, the illness of one or another, still continuing; so that we know not when we shall begin, though the poetry and music have long been ready.

Vienna has been in a constant fermentation with balls, operas and plays (*f*); and yet during the whole carnival, I have never seen the door of the theatre, nor heard a fiddle scrape. *Quod Deus bene vertat*; so you see, that our tastes coincide. Give a chaste embrace for me to the most respected priests, and believe me *ex corde*.

Vienna, March 7, 1763.

(*f*) These must have been on occasion of the peace with Prussia.

L E T T E R XVII.

TO THE SAME.

LONG life to my dear Filipponi ! your friendly attention in seconding so diligently my solicitude concerning the arrival and state of health of *Count Canale* and his household, is worthy of a friend who knows every motion of my heart, like one of its ancient inhabitants. I am extremely grateful to you for it, and beg of you to continue this most obliging office ; the rather, as I abstain from embarrassing the travellers with useless trouble, that I may not oblige *Count Canale*, through courtesy, to waste his precious moments in answering letters purely officious. The Countess of *Canale* had already a due canonical account, but is extremely pleased with a repetition of it, as however superabundant the accounts may be, they will never be in equilibrium with her anxiety ; therefore I thank you again in her name,

I beg of you to make a thousand respectful and affectionate compliments for me to the most worthy count, assuring him that if
he

he does not soon return to the forsaken lyceum, he will find that illustrious babbling society which he has left in the hands of *Sig. Hagen* and me, quite abandoned. Adieu.

Vienna, October 30, 1763.

LETTER XVIII.

TO THE SAME.

THE letters of my dear *Sig. Filipponi*, besides the intrinsic value which they always have in my estimation, are now rendered still more interesting by the tidings they contain of our most respected *Count Canale* and the amiable *Canaletti*. I am extremely grateful for your letter of last month, and entreat you to continue your friendly complacency, in constantly gratifying my impatient and affectionate solicitude.

After usual expressions of respect and kindness, tell him in my name, that I congratulate him on the admirable state of health which his ample and flourishing family enjoys here, not forgetting the two last tender shoots, who have fought like heroes, and subdued the small-pox, which this
year

year has been very tremendous in Austria, and of which we have had but too sorrowful a proof in the loss of our beloved Arch-duchess Isabella, a stroke with which we are still stunned.

You may easily imagine how much I sigh for the return of my dear *Count Canale*; but take care not to speak to him on the subject. I, who know his heart, am certain what he must suffer from being constrained to quit Vienna, and leave so many pledges behind him: as well as the being obliged to remain at Turin, so far from a Patron, who unites in so uncommon a manner, the majesty of a sovereign, with the tenderness of a father and a friend.

Vienna, December 5, 1763.

Metastasio, who had been under no necessity of importuning the muses for favours of great importance, during the war of 1756, was called upon, about this time, to furnish several dramas for his court.

Alcide al Bivio, set by Hasse, 1760, for the nuptials of the Archduke Joseph, afterwards Emperor, with the Princess *Isabella of Bourbon*. *Clelia*, set likewise by Hasse, 1762,
for

for the safe delivery of the same Princesses. *L'Atenaide ovver gli affetti generosi*; written also in 1762, by command of their Imperial majesties, and set by *Bonno*, in order to be represented in the apartments of the Imperial palace, by five Arch-dutchesses: *Maria Isabella of Bourbon*, first consort of the late Emperor Joseph; *Marianne*, afterwards dutchess of Saxon-Teſchen, *Mary Elizabeth*; and *Mary Amelia*, afterwards dutchess of Parma. But this projected plan was rendered abortive, by the decease of the Arch-dutchess Isabella of Bourbon, who died of the small-pox. Besides these dramas, Metastasio furnished the court with several short occasional lyric compositions, which were called *complimenti*, and set by *Haffe*, *Gluck*, or *Wagenſeil*.

At this time all the sons and daughters of Apollo in Italy, were ambitious of Metastasio's acquaintance: the modest and diffident wished to avail themselves of his council; the vain, of his praise. Our author's candid and pacific disposition inclined him to treat them all with lenity. His disapprobation was accompanied with such politeness, that it was easy for self-love to construe it into panegyric. His correspondence with a literary lady

lady of rank, at Siena, may serve as a specimen of his critical urbanity. Some letters seem to have passed between them, previous to those which appear in the collection: as the first in which he speaks of the lady's partial friendship is short, and only an accompaniment to the present of the poet's opera of *Clelia*.

L E T T E R XIX.

TO THE NOBLE SIGNORA LIVIA ACCARIGI,
PATRICIAN OF SIENA.

THE tribute, rather than gift, of my *Clelia*, was undeserving of the excessive recompense of such an obliging and partial letter, as that with which you have deigned to honour me. I feel extremely proud of it, not indeed as a proof of the excellence of my drama, but as a testimony of that uncommon friendship which has seduced your judgment. Continue, most illustrious lady, to honour your sex and Italy with your laudable studies, and believe me to be impressed with the highest esteem and respect, &c.

Vienna, July 14, 1762.

L E T T

L E T T E R X X.

TO THE SAME.

I WAS greatly astonished to find in your last most obliging letter, that among the many excellencies by which you are distinguished, there should be that of an exemplary docility, a virtue so little known in Parnassus. I congratulate you, Madam, upon it, and desire that it may be propagated in our colleges, where only its mask can be found, and where every one begs applause, in asking for correction.

You will greatly improve your drama, by making the character of *Thomyris* more decided and constant. Indeed the most vicious part of an audience, is always pleased with examples of magnanimity; I should therefore suppress that generosity which *Thomyris* manifests towards the end, and study from the beginning, and through the whole drama, to make her think, speak, and act in such a manner, that there should be no inconsistency in her becoming generous. Let her be proud and vindictive, if you please;

but let her not accomplish her vengeance by a most premeditated assassination, nor lose her passion for such deeds when committed. The Hyrcanian becomes more harsh, insolent and proud, without principles of morality, or civilization. But his irregularities affect only himself, rendering him a distinct character, by extravagances that are even ridiculous, as far as the dignity of the buskin will allow; yet these extravagances are never of such a kind, as reduce the other personages, either to the necessity of bearing unreasonable sufferings and passing for cowards, or of punishing, tragically, the savage follies of ignorance and brutality.

Now, descending to the minutia of all the events and occasions which may be imagined, in support of your two principal characters, would be fettering your fancy; of which it is my wish to indicate the points at which you are to aim, but not to limit your choice of such means as are most suitable to your genius, in the prosecution of your plan.

I have made diligent enquiry of my recollection, in order to discover some traces of the two odes, of which you imagine I must have been sometime in possession, through your kindness; and think I can safely
affirm,

affirm, that I have never seen them : if by accident, these transcripts had been mislaid, I am very certain that I should never have lost the remembrance of any production of yours.

Continue to honour me with your enviable partiality, and with such commands as may afford me an opportunity of manifesting with how much respect I am, &c.

Vienna, October, 1763.

L E T T E R XXI.

TO THE SAME.

I ACKNOWLEDGE, with gratitude equal to the singular confidence with which you honour me, the having received and attentively perused your manuscript of *Thomyris*; and am proud that Italy can boast a young lady of such rare talents, and who is capable of undertaking one of the most difficult enterprises which the inhabitants of Parnassus dare attempt. I have found the diction clear and happy, and frequent instances of such theatrical distress, as is usually neither the fruit of learning nor talents, but of long experience. I have found characters drawn with

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vigour,

vigour, and, in short, the whole work has surpassed my expectation, as it must that of every one who knows the enormous difficulty of such a perilous business, and is not ignorant of this being the first time that you have failed in an ocean that is rendered terrible by such innumerable shipwrecks. I therefore congratulate you ; and think, that there is no literary undertaking in which I may not promise success to your laudable application, and cultivated and distinguished talents.

You must not expect me, madam, to write a formal academic discourse, defining all the constituent parts of the drama. This would be a treatise which I should have no time to write, or you patience to read. Indeed it would be a useless undertaking: as I could tell you nothing of which you may not be informed by my dear friend the *Abate Pasquini*; a man who has done honour to the Italian stage, who is your friend as well as mine, and from his perfect knowledge of my heart and mind, can tell you as well as myself, what I think and what I feel.

But that you may not doubt of the attention with which I have read your drama, or
think

think me more forward than I ought to be, take the two following observations.

Thomyris, at the end of the piece, is full of great, virtuous, and magnanimous sentiments; but at the beginning she meditates, determines, and orders, an assassination. This seems a duplicity of character as repugnant to rule, as two-fifths in music. It is true that there are in nature, devout rascals, and blustering cowards; but they are insufferable, and our theatre requires decided characters.

The principal feature in the character of *Ircano* appears to me violent; not because brutality does not suit his disposition, but being called a coward by the general, he remains *such*, unless he kills or is killed by him in a duel. It is true, that the Spanish point of honour did not subsist in the time of Thomyris; but common prejudices must be respected; and this is one of our most inconvenient servitudes.

Be careful of your health, for the honour of your sex, and believe me to be, with equal esteem and respect, &c.

We shall now resume Metastasio's correspondence with his friend FARINELLI, whom he very anxiously tries to moralize into philosophy and tranquillity, if not comfort. He had been driven out of Paradise, that is, ordered to quit Spain, on the accession of Charles III, and seemed to wish to spend the rest of his days in his native city of Naples, among his relations ; but for political reasons, that comfort was denied him. He had then thoughts of settling in England ; but that was not agreeable to the court of Spain, as the two nations were then at war. After visiting several cities in Italy, in order to chuse a future abode, Bologna was prescribed to him, as the place which would give the least umbrage to the Spanish monarch ; seemingly, because Farinelli had fewer acquaintance, and was likely to pass his time there in a more gloomy and comfortless manner, than any where else. This, besides his sincere affliction for the loss of his royal patrons, and the importance which his talents and conduct had acquired him at Madrid, rendered lessons of resignation difficult to learn : to reconcile the mind to such misfortunes and mortifications, was a work of years ; but for
the

the recovery of its former tone of happiness, life was too short !

L E T T E R XXII.

TO FARINELLI.

THE dear and amiable bearer of this letter, goes into Italy with a firm resolution, vigourously to attack your obstinate melancholy : a work worthy of a good and true friend. I envy him, and should be glad to accompany him, as an ally in so meritorious an enterprise. Let him have his way, my dear friend, and never let it enter into your head to protect your internal foe. You have given proofs sufficient of your good heart, and sense of gratitude and duty ; it is time to resign yourself to the will of Providence, and to dispel the clouds which obscure every comfort of life. So prays your most affectionate and faithful Gemello.

Vienna, January 17, 1763.

L E T T E R XXIII.

TO THE SAME.

OUR honoured *Abate Cetrulo* sets off suddenly for Italy ; and assures me, that his first business will be the visiting the incomparable *Gemello* : so that I should believe myself to be excommunicated in *bullæ cænæ*, if I did not avail myself of this opportunity to embrace you affectionately *per procuratorem*, at least a hundred times. I likewise send a good dose of friendship to our dear *Petrillo* : to whom I acknowledge myself extremely obliged for the care he takes in keeping up your spirits ; of which I discovered more than one indication in your answer to the letter which I consigned to his care. I now begin to discover that my beloved CARLUCCIO is as superior to the frowns, as he has hitherto been to the smiles, of fortune. I promised myself this heroism from you : and was certain that your greatest difficulty was *knowing how to set bounds* to the tender excesses of your good heart, and gratitude. Now time and reflection have rendered you

master

master of yourself, it is fit, my dear friend, that you should enjoy that sweet tranquillity, which is so justly due to your toils and conduct.

We have here, for some months, our worthy and excellent *Panzacchi*, who has been called from Bavaria to sing in the Vienna Theatre. I have always esteemed him; but, at present, love him more than ever; assuring myself every moment, that he was a long time witness of your friendship and affection for me (g). I never doubted of it, and yet it pleases and flatters me to meet with any one that can confirm it. He commissions me to present a thousand respects to you. Imagine to yourself how I must tease and pester him with questions concerning your person.

I beg that you, who are full of humanity, will examine a little our *Cetrulo*, concerning the objects of his journey to Naples. It seems to me as if he were going to ruin himself. I have preached, but in vain. Do you perform the pious work of persuasion.

Adieu, my ever dear Charles.

Vienna, April 26, 1763.

(g) See *Present State of Music in Germany*, vol. 1. art. MUNICH, for a further account of this performer.

L E T T E R XXIV.

TO THE SAME.

HEAVEN bleſs my dear Gemello, for having at length drawn his head out of that hypochondriac ſlough of deſpair, in which it has ſo long been plunged ! The laſt letter which I received from you, after your little excursion to Parma, and the accounts I have had from *Petrillo*, whom I ſaw a few days ago in his way to Saxony, have afforded me infinite conſolation. I was going to tell you, that you had, at length, ſuffered that reaſon to be vanquiſhed, which had been your conſtant guide in the miſt of all the powerful allurements of fortune : allurements which in every age have turned the heads of the wiſeſt men, though double baked in the oven of philoſophy. Now my dear Gemello is victorious, I hope he will take advantage of the victory. That he will eſtabliſh ſuch a ſerene and tranquil way of life, as ſhall enable him to enjoy that peace to which Providence conſents ; and convince the world,

that

that he is still the same FARINELLI, in every situation.

Our *Menghino*, who has always your name in his mouth, is here very justly esteemed. I see him daily, and take great care not to let him indulge his natural fantastic imaginations, in which I find him much mended : but not quite cured.

You must already know, that here we are become Neapolitans, *in verbo terremoto*. In the morning of the vigil of St. Peter, a little before and a little after five o'clock, we felt, in Vienna, two reasonably violent shocks : and afterwards an account was brought from Hungary, of the total ruin of the city of Komorren, and other places in its neighbourhood. If the Neapolitans send us their earthquakes, it is to be hoped that they will likewise send us their figs, grapes, surrento veal, exquisite pork, and all the other good things of which we are in want ; but it is quite unchristian to send us only the bad.

I love and esteem our dear *Carlani*, as much as his honourable and trusty character deserves ; and rejoice extremely that you know his worth, and have him so near you. For, to tell you the truth, your good heart always makes me tremble, knowing how

much it has been abused in former times. Be cautious, my dear friend ; and when you have found an honest man, take him to your bosom as a great treasure ; for this vale of tears in which we live, does not produce them in great abundance.

God help that obstinate head of *Cetrulo* ! I have great fears that he goes about seeking ills, like the physicians. Farewell, dear Gemello ; persevere in your melioration, till you are perfectly cured ; and your entire mental health will contribute infinitely to that of your most faithful Gemello.

Vienna, June 11, 1763.

L E T T E R XXV.

TO THE SAME.

ON Friday, the 9th instant, in the dusk of the evening, arrived at Vienna, the very obliging Sig. *Pasquali Potenza* ; on Saturday, and yesterday, he favoured me with a visit, and to-day he set out early for Prague. His manners and conversation prove him to be no goose, and that he knows the world.

I have

I have no doubt of his professional merit ; his reputation, and your venerable opinion are sufficient for me ; but I have not yet had the pleasure of hearing him (*b*). I could not help expressing a wish for that gratification ; but he excused himself, by saying that his voice was out of order, not being recovered from the effects of his journey ; and I was unwilling to press him, under such circumstances. Yesterday, he dined out of town, at the villa of Count *Durazzo*, and on being solicited by the lady of the house, he sung. How could he resist the power of beauty ? I have extracted from him all the information I possibly could, concerning yourself ; particularly with respect to your present spirits ; and am very well pleased with you. Continue, my dear Gemello, to rub off your mind that abominable rust, which by degrees would have annihilated all your faculties. I should pursue this subject, had I not a hundred disagreeable letters on my hands, which I must inevitably answer : therefore,

(*b*) This performer was in England during the seasons of 1758 and 1759, when the *Mattei* was manager, and first woman. He seemed to know music very well, and sung in good taste ; but his voice was in decay, and his intonation frequently false.

with

with a hearty embrace, I recommend to your memory, your most faithful Gemello.

Vienna, September 12, 1763.

LETTER XXVI.

TO THE SAME.

VERY soon after the receipt of your last letter of the 23d of September, the respectable Dr. *Savich*, *Æsculapius* to the Prince of *Lichtenstein*, appeared in my room: and immediately upon his entrance, giving me a hearty kiss, said that it had been consigned to me by my most implacable enemy: I recognised immediately by the colour, of what materials the stuff was made; and he was astonished at my spirit of prophecy. Oh how he is delighted with your courtesy, conversation, and every thing that belongs to you! He talked only of you, for an hour and half; and you may well imagine that I did not try to change the subject. He commissioned me to present a thousand respectful and affectionate compliments to you on his part, and you ought to swear upon the *agnus Dei* that he was punctually obeyed, Therefore

Therefore honour the letter of credit, which I draw upon you at sight, for value received. I have not yet seen Baron *Leschgold*, but in the mean time, I have contrived, with the assistance of a common friend, to let him know how much you have said in your letters concerning him.

Dear Gemello, my mute devil will say nothing, either good or bad. When I am unable to speak plainly, I am silent; not having been able, in thirty three years residence at court, to learn the language of oracles that are applicable to every sense. My taste is for the round *yes* or *no*, the taste of our ancestors. Now between ourselves, I shall tell you frankly; that if your project is such as it seems to me, through your mysterious expressions, there is nothing in the world, *with respect to myself*, which would afford me greater pleasure and consolation; and if you doubt a moment of this truth, you would be (what my Gemello never can be) the most ungrateful animal that ever was on the surface of the earth. But the *bus illis* is such, that an honest man should never purchase his own pleasure at the expence of a friend, and particularly of such a friend as you are. How is it possible for me to judge of these
futtrue

future contingencies, if I am utterly ignorant of the Southern and Northern dispositions, which may render the supposed project prudent and practicable? He would be a stupid physician, indeed, who should attempt to cure, without knowing the disease and state of the patient. What I perfectly know is, that you have acted such a part in the world, as renders you unfit for inferior characters. This is all that my heart, which is wholly devoted to you, can say. If you will explain yourself further, I shall second your wishes to the utmost of my power. In the mean time, continue to love yours most faithfully (i).

P. S. The King of Poland passed to a better life the 5th of last month.

Vienna, October 10, 1763.

(i) The letter to which this was an answer, notwithstanding the mystery in which its contents were couched, seems, from the reply, to have included an invitation to the poet to spend the rest of his days with his twin friend in Italy.

L E T-

L E T T E R XXVII.

TO THE SAME.

IN spite of a heap of extremely tiresome letters which I have to answer, and the company of some nymphs, who have had the goodness to drink chocolate with me in my poetical cabin, though it is post day, and are all cackling like geese in the next room, I cannot help embracing most heartily my dear Gemello: and being as much in want of materials as time for a long letter, let this serve only as a manifestation of the constancy of my well cemented twinship.

It is most certain, dear friend, that I have an excessive desire to visit Italy; but there are so many fises to tune, that it is no easy matter to determine. The South, the North, the East, the West, and every canton of this miserable globe which we inhabit, has its particular intemperance and inconveniencies: and we must regulate ourselves like prudent pilots, not merely to avoid disgrace for our want of judgment, but remorse, which is the greatest torment to which rational beings

are exposed. But do not imagine from this preachment, that I have wholly relinquished the hope of seeing charming Italy again, at least for a short time. Who knows? In the mean time, take great care of the *fardle*, *number one*, and continue indefatigably to equal the true and tender friendship of your most constant Gemello.

Frain, November 14, 1763.

LETTER XXVIII.

TO THE SAME.

THE impertinence of your complaints, which, according to your last letter, have obliged you to keep your bed, has put me into a great rage. While there are so many malevolent animals upon which they might have amused themselves to the advantage of humanity; why should they torment honest gentlemen, born to delight and assist their fellow creatures? But we must not dive into the mysteries of Providence. The good-humour which reigns in your letter makes me hope, that you have subdued these domestic foes, and I am impatient to have it confirmed.

When-

Whenever I am able to transport my frail frame towards the south, be assured, my dear Gemello, that I shall not chuse the time when the great northern stars are in motion (*k*). How could I possibly survive such a tumult? Crowds of travellers, scarcity of beds, tired horses, insolence of superiors, neglect of inferiors, rapacity of postmasters, drunkenness of postillions, inns robbed, roads broke up, disorder, confusion, hurry, scarcity, and a thousand other plagues of all kinds! Mercy on me! The merely thinking of these things makes my hair stand an end. During more than thirty-three years that I have been in this old vortex, I have contrived to avoid all such enterprises: think therefore whether, at this time of the year, I should be able to make so rash and daring an experiment: I, who for so many years have lived in this imperial residence like a hermet in the deserts of the Thebaid; and who never set my foot in the court, unless when a command from my most clement sovereigns illuminates my humble dwelling, and conducts me to the imperial palace. If we do not begin

(*k*) This was written at the time of the general peace in Germany.

to open our eyes to our own infirmities, when, and to what, my dear friend, shall we open them?

Adieu. Recommend me to your daily gossips, as I never fail to speak of you to all my favourite prattlers. But above all, take care of yourself, and preserve so valuable an individual to your, &c.

Vienna, December 12, 1763.

L E T T E R XXIX.

TO THE SAME.

OUR amiable *Petrillo*, after having been more than a mere spectator of the calamities and catastrophe of the tragedy of poor Dresden, has passed through this country like lightning. He is going to breathe the delightful air of Italy, and, after so much agitation, to pass in tranquillity the rest of his days. If he puts in practice the wise philosophical maxims which he now professes, he will be worthy of envy. I could not resist this opportunity of embracing my dear Gemello, and of assuring him, though I trust unnecessarily, that my affection for him will never be diminished, till this little piece of mechan-

mechanism shall be totally decomposed. I hope yours gathers strength daily, and that your soul being commodiously lodged, may cherish that chearful and festive disposition which embellished your former days, and lightened the heaviest vexations of life. Think of me now and then, my dear friend; and believe that I am, and ever shall be, your most faithful, &c.

Vienna, February 1, 1764.

L E T T E R XXX.

TO THE SAME.

Now, as your complaints assail you in F-FA-UT, with a *second* and *fourth*, the remedy, my dearest Gemello, is plain. The natural resolution is in C-SOL-FA-UT; (1) and when it is known what is to be done, it is our own fault if we suffer by not doing it. The

(1) This playful allusion to the laws of harmony, will be well understood by musicians; but may want explanation by such readers as have not been initiated into the mysteries of composition. The *second* and *fourth* being discords to the musical sound called F, the ear remains in torture till it hears the *perfect chord* of C, as chord of the sixth to the base E: which, figuratively implies, returning from *sickness* to *health*, or from *vexation* and *embarrassment*, to *tranquillity* and *comfort*.

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worst is, when we know not which way to steer. In such cases, I form an alliance with patience: conclude that I have a certain burthen to carry, settle it on my poor shoulders, and then I suffer much less by its weight than if I carried it awkwardly. Believe me, my dear friend, you can pursue no better method. All the impatience to which you may give way, will only aggravate and augment your injuries, and make a loss of four equal to eight. All the knowledge we have, comes from experience in morality, as well as natural philosophy.

If you wish clearly to understand your Gemello, never seek for any other meaning in his words, than that which they present at first sight. The speaking or acting mysteriously and politically, is not my way, nor a way I understand, after thirty-four years at court. I am as ignorant of the aulic science as when I first entered the service. Nature has made me, in this respect, like a duck, who passes a great part of its time in the water, without ever being wet.

Our *Petrillo*, who flies through Vienna, will bring you this letter, and a hearty embrace.

Vienna, Feb. 9, 1764

LET-

L E T T E R XXXI.

TO THE SAME.

YOUR last letter of the 5th inst. has really consoled me. From the serenity and pleasantry with which it is coloured from the beginning to the end, I conceive that you are at length arrived at the secret of wiping from your mind that cursed foot with which it has so long been discoloured. I congratulate you on your success, in an enterprise which borders on a species of heroism of which so few are capable. We have an infinite number of great men, who are venerated as models of knowledge and prudence, who have sunk under catastrophes much less violent than yours. Happiness, therefore, attend my dear Gemello! who has proved himself as much superior in adversity as prosperity, and who knows how to estimate human felicity better than those who call themselves philosophers; and is in no want of scholastic jargon to enable him to stand firm and motionless in every gust of wind. Heaven bless and keep you in this wise and placid state for at least half a century!

Our dear *Majo* has been arrived some time, but I have seen him but once, and then only for a short time. I received him with all that affection which I cannot help bestowing on persons beloved by you, and whose merit is universally known (*m*). Nor shall I neglect any opportunity of serving him, as far as the august circumference of my limited faculties shall extend. The best of it is, that he not only never comes near me, but leaves me in perfect ignorance of the hiding place where he has hitherto amused himself here, during the leisure in which he has hitherto lived. Perhaps some ancient sparks have rekindled the extinguished conflagration, and the poor soul will be involved in the flames and smoke which formerly, as I am informed, scorched and confounded him.

Adieu, my amiable Gemello; continue to let me enjoy the pleasure of hearing of your tranquillity: take care of your health, and embrace for me, my dear and much honoured Cariani.

Vienna, March 27, 1764.

L E T-

(*m*) This must have been the celebrated Neapolitan composer, *Ciccio de Majo*, who died young, about the year 1771. He began to flourish in 1759; having composed that

L E T T E R XXXII.

TO THE SAME.

THE pleasant inventory of your transient complaints, contained in your last letter, would have made me laugh, if the idea of the sufferings they must have occasioned, added to the daily experience of my own, had not awakened a croud of serious reflections. But these are not worth a fig; and, indeed, are themselves worse plagues than the others. Therefore, my dear Gemello, the most infallible antidote is, not to think of them, except when the machine is disordered by them; but to go on, as well as we can, in hoping for good, and tolerating the evils of existence, as I am now obliged to do.

Your most amiable *de Majo* generously gives me credit for wishing to serve him, but

that year, *Riccihero*, for the theatre *delle Dame* at Rome, and in 1763, the year when this letter was written, his *Demofonte* was performed in the *Argentina* theatre of the same city. The last opera he composed was *Didone*, for the theatre at Venice, 1770.

hitherto has absolutely avoided putting my zeal to the test. A man of his merit, and your friend, would have a right to dispose of me at his pleasure. But he, who is no fool, knowing perhaps the little extent of my power, is unwilling to expose me to the shame of confessing it. I am unable to inform you whether he has been caught in the old net. I never frequent the woods which expose him to such danger, and have never been able to examine him; as during his long residence on the banks of the *Ijler*, I have only had the pleasure of seeing him two or three times, at most. Indeed his continuing so constantly invisible, and remaining here so long, without any apparent motive, seems to favour your conjectures. If he is at sea, I wish him a prosperous gale; if such a wish is not inconsiderate: as the felicity of a navigation depends much on the cause for which we embark; and I never wish my friends to be possessed of such an inconsiderate courage.

I frequently see our merry friend, and the eloquent *Bonechi*, who loves you as you deserve: so that with this addition, and so many other amiable qualities, you may imagine how dear he is to me. I have faithfully

fully communicated to him your commissions, and he has charged me with too many things to be executed in this world.

Vienna, July 9, 1764.

LETTER XXXIII.

TO THE SAME.

AFTER distilling my brains for two whole days, I am obliged to confess, my dear Gemello, that I have not been able to decipher your *Tarantella*. I flatter myself that there is nothing very bad, as your humour is not tinged with melancholy: on the contrary, it is more serene and pleasant than usual. The mysterious language in which you have masqued your new situation, has made me suspect, that some irregularity had disturbed the œconomy of your whole system; and that your virgin modesty, which is alarmed by every shadow of immodesty, had not suffered you to explain yourself. Whatever it is, I desire you will immediately cease to torment yourself about it, and not suffer it to prevent your intended nuptial visit to our dear *Carlari*: to whom I wish abundant stores of all

kinds, necessary for the voyage he undertakes.

Our ardent and languid *Majo*, stimulated by his friends and by his duty, is at length set off for *Manheim*, where he is engaged to compose an opera for the Elector Palatine. With what heart he has left the banks of the *Ister*, enamoured turtles say!

I shall be short in my account of all the fine things which I am ordered to say to you, in the name of our most amiable common friend, Sig. BONECHI, the Neapolitan consul; but you will soon meet, and then I beg you to embrace him cordially and repeatedly for me. Think with what envy I shall be tormented, at not making a third in your meetings. I must have patience, as I seem only born for the exercise of philosophic moderation. If you knew how well I bore my plagues, you would take me for a hero. But the trade of heroism is a vile employment, and my shoulders ache at the mere mention of it. But let us talk no longer of complaints and misfortunes. Conceal yours as much as you can, and I shall do the same by mine. In this manner we shall defeat the intentions of fortune, and bid defiance to ill-luck. Farewell; love me as you used to do.
And

And be assured, that in spite of all our plagues, you will ever be dear to me, and I to you.

Vienna, August 25, 1764.

L E T T E R XXXIV.

TO THE SAME.

You must not imagine, my dear Gemello, that I am drowned in the river Lethe. I am still among the living, but not my own master. My most clement patroness has too high an opinion of my worn-out poetical talents, and has now given me a task beyond the power of the hoarse old swan. It is true, that oracular sovereigns always qualify their commands with the gracious and most humane conditions of: *if you can: if you will*; but you know, by experience, what weight these phrases have, when uttered by divinities. However, in spite of my occupations, I shall steal a few moments from the babbling muses, for the sake of conversing a little with my dear Gemello, for however short a time, in order to break our silence, and prevent it from becoming habitual.

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I beg you, in my name, to wish vigour and a numerous progeny to our new married friends, and their ladies. Continue to love me; pray to heaven to grant me patience; and believe me, till the consummation of all things, yours, &c.

Vienna, November 3, 1764.

END OF THE FIFTH SECTION.

SECTION VI.

AS there is a chasm of six months between this letter, and the next to his friend Farinelli, we shall go back to his other correspondents, in order, as much as possible, to let them march a breast.

The following letter, to *Padre Martini*, is of no other importance, than as a record of Metastasio's friendship and regard for that venerable and worthy musical monk; who had sent him a book of Duets for two voices, which were afterwards printed, and dedicated to the late Electress dowager of Saxony. They are in an easy mixed chamber style, in which ancient and modern passages are agreeably interwoven. The words were wholly selected from the works of the imperial bard.

 LETTER I.

TO PADRE MARTINI,

By the kind care of the worthy *Abate Preti*, the bearer of this letter, I yesterday found

found upon my harpsichord, the masterly duets of which you, reverend Sir, have done me the honour to make me a present. Our young female composer executed them all immediately, one after the other, with the assistance of a second voice. And we have concluded, that they will long remain subjects of study for her, and of delight to me: so much do we admire them at present. I am extremely obliged to you, not only for this gift, but for your partiality to my rhymes; and am anxious for an opportunity of manifesting with what sincere and perfect esteem I have the honour to be, &c.

Vienna, March 1764

About this time, *Padre Martini*, in writing his history of music, being in want of a M. S. in the Imperial library, at Vienna, applied to *Metastasio* to procure him a transcript of it; and the following letter is an answer to the acknowledgments which he had received from this good father, for having complied with his request.

L E T-

L E T T E R II.

TO PADRE MARTINI.

Your most obliging letter has afforded me a very singular satisfaction; as I discover by its contents, that you are pleased with the extracts which I had the happiness to procure for you. Indeed I am not a little proud in having done a service to the public by contributing my small store of materials towards the construction of your sublime edifice. *Sig. Martinetz*, keeper of the Imperial library, and his indefatigable sister, return with respect and gratitude, their best compliments: and for myself, I beg you to believe, that I am eager for new occasions to shew my readiness in obeying your commands, and have the honour to be with the most respectful esteem, &c.

Vienna, August 2, 1765.

The following letter having been written to explain a doubtful passage in Metastasio's *Alessandro nell' Indie*, seems worthy of a place here, as every difficulty in an author's works, is best explained by himself.

L E T-

L E T T E R III.

TO SIG. NICCOLO DELLA CHIESA, IN
SALUZZO.

My first duty, in answering the letter with which you have honoured me, is to thank you and your illustrious and enlightened nobility, for the partiality you are pleased to express for my writings. The second duty is, the speedy execution of your respected commands. I shall therefore, without stopping to say how much I think myself honoured by your favourable opinion, hasten to the business in question.

The first opening of *Alessandro nell' Indie*, presents to the spectators a view of a ruined camp, a flying army, and *Porus* in vain trying to stop their flight. He cries out to the fugitives to rally, and tries to stimulate courage by reproaches; *Fermatevi o codardi!* (Stop cowards!) He endeavours to revive in them sentiments of magnanimity and fortitude, by reminding them, that life is not worth saving by a shameful and ignominious flight, at the expence of honour. *Ab con la fuga mal si compra una vita.* The frightened
soldiers

soldiers continue to fly, without listening to him. When *Porus* despairing of being heard, no longer looks after his fugitive troops, says to himself, almost in the voice of reproach : to whom am I speaking ? Why should I expect that men so terrified are capable of listening to reason, and of remembering the laws of obedience and duty ? *A chi ragiono ? Non ha legge il timor.* (With whom am I reasoning ? Fear has no law.) From this interpretation, you will easily comprehend, Sir, that the performer who represents the character of *Porus*, should not recite the words *A chi ragiono ?* with his face turned towards the fugitive soldiers, but to himself, or (*from theatrical license*) to the audience, and never in a commanding tone : but rather in that of a man who blames himself for having made a fruitless attempt.

I am extremely fortunate that this dispute has occasioned me the honour of your commands, and I hope that my ready obedience will obtain for me the continuance of that partiality with which I am so much flattered.

Vienna, June 24, 1764.

This year, *Metastasio* resumed and finished his correspondence with *Signora Accarigi*.

He had sent this lady a copy of his new opera of *EGERIA*, written for the coronation of Joseph (the late Emperor) King of the Romans, and set by *Haffé*; and having received a letter of thanks for his present, the following is the poet's reply.

L E T T E R I V .

TO SIGNORA LIVIA ACCARIGI.

WHEN I had the honour, madam, to send you my *Egeria*, I had no other intention than to remind you of my esteem and respect; but my messenger having exceeded her commission, I perceive that she has exacted from your politeness, an excess of gratitude, and obliging expressions. The merit of having procured me such enviable advantages, will render me more indulgent to the frailties of my fortunate commissary. I shall not exaggerate to you, madam, the vanity excited in a poet by the approbation of a muse; on the contrary, I shall carefully avoid meddling with a subject so perilous. Continue, most illustrious lady, with your laudable application to do honour to your sex,

fex,

sex, by furnishing new motives of admiration, in the midst of which I entreat you never to forget the constant esteem, and sincere respect with which I am and ever shall remain, &c.

Vienna, October 4, 1764.

Metastasio's fame at this time, was so great, and extensive, not only as a dramatic poet, but as a man of learning, taste, and genius; that his opinions were eagerly sought on subjects of literature, by critics, ambitious of being his correspondents, in all parts of Europe. It is possible, perhaps, for a man of learning, study, and natural acumen, to be a good critic of the works of others; without genius for producing original works themselves, similar to those which they are able to censure: as was the case with Longinus, Bentley, Bossu, and others; yet still, *cæteris paribus*, the opinion of practical poets, and practical artists of every kind, will have more weight in the scale of criticism, than those of mere theorists.

The following letter, the only one in the collection, to the same person, seems to contain Metastasio's poetical creed.

LETTER V.

TO SIG. D. DOMENICO DIODATI.

IF I had been able to gratify my wish, you would not, Sir, have waited so long for this answer to your letter. But it very seldom happens, my much respected friend, that I am a free agent. A lasting series of social duties and friendly offices, always required and always inevitable, cruelly deprive me of that leisure, which the uncertainty of my health, and the duties of my employment would now and then, perhaps, allow me to dedicate to some genial study and useful intercourse, with those very few *quos æquus amavit Jupiter*. The profit and pleasure which I derive from your letters, would oblige me to deserve them more frequently by the punctuality of my answers: and if I am sometimes obliged, much against my inclination, to neglect our correspondence, the loss I sustain by it, should entitle me rather to pity than pardon. I ought here, before all things, to protest against the excess
of

of your partiality for me ; but the merely repeating what you say, even with a view to combat it, is extremely dangerous. The vanity of poets has no occasion for incitements ; its persuasions are but too seducing, and in order that my moderation may preserve a due equilibrium, I must not expose myself to such powerful temptations. Let me therefore hasten to answer your questions.

I confess that free eloquence would have had an equal share of my attention with that which is confined to measure ; but destined to be numbered among the insects of Parnassus, it has not been in my power to divide my time equally between them. I have frequently attempted some prose production, between my poetical occupations, yet always analagous to my trade ; but obliged by sovereign commands to return to the *tibia* and the *lyre*, the parenthesis has been so long, that when I went back to my interrupted labours, I found the metal which I had left in fusion and ready for the mould, so chilled, that I was obliged to abandon it. And finding in myself less patience for running back after dissipated ideas, than courage for new enterprises, I became so dissatisfied

and disgusted with my attempts, that I totally discontinued them. However, these attempts, or rather abortions, perhaps, still exist, in a dispersed and confused state among my loose and useless papers, like the Sybil's leaves, dissipated by the wind; but in pure œconomy of my little credit, I shall take care that they do not survive me (*n*); especially if one day or other (which I can hardly hope) I do not get leisure sufficient to put them in some decent order. The only labours which, in despite of the buskin, I have ever been able to terminate, are some short *observations on the tragedies and comedies of the Greeks* (*o*). But these observations, besides the want of amplification and correction from the errors of haste, are only tools of my workshop, and no less through my own defects than the nature of the subject,

(*n*) The poet was sincere in this declaration: for neither these *Observations*, his *Extract from Aristotle's Art of Poetry*, nor his translation of Horace's *Ars Poetica*, with notes, appeared till after his decease.

(*o*) These, and select letters &c. by Metastasio, which will be further mentioned hereafter, are now printing at Vienna, from the original MSS. which the publisher has obtained from *Mademoiselle Marianne Martines*, the poet's eleve and executrix, in three volumes, and in three different forms, to suit the last Paris and Venetian editions.

in want of that kind of alluring eloquence which seduces the reader. And therefore, useful only to myself, they aspire at no public approbation.

As to my private letters, they never seemed to me to merit the trouble of being registered. However, for some years back, a studious young man (*p*), and a lover of our language, has been transcribing as an exercise, such as the shortness of the time on post-days would allow, and has already collected a greater number than I wished; but I am very certain that he will never abuse my confidence, by ungratefully violating the express order which I have given him not to publish them. And here, according to your request, you have a most minute account of my prosaic applications.

Your second request, that I would pronounce between the merit of *ARIOSTO* and *TASSO*, is too difficult a task for the limits of my faculties. You know, Sir, with what tumults the Parnassus of Italy was agitated, when *Godfrey* first attempted to dispute the primacy with *Orlando*, of which he had

(*p*) This was the counsellor and keeper of the Imperial library, *Signor Giuseppe Martinetz*, elder brother to the above lady.

justly been so long in possession. You know also how the press groaned with the useless labours of your *Pellegrinis*, *Rossis*, *Salviatis*, and a hundred other champions on both sides. You likewise know that the pacific *Orazio Ariosto*, the descendant of *Lodovico*, vainly endeavoured to reconcile the combatants, telling them that the poems of these two divine bards were of a species so different, that they admitted of no parallel; that *Torquato* had determined never to lay down the trumpet, and had in a marvellous manner, adhered to his resolution; that *Lodovico's* design was to delight his readers with a variety of style, mixing in a pleasant manner with the heroic, the jocose, and the festive, and had wonderfully succeeded. That the first had demonstrated the magic power of art, the other the felicity of unrestrained nature; that both had justly acquired the applause and admiration of the public; and that both had arrived at the summit of poetical glory, but by different roads, and without intentional rivalry. You cannot in short, be ignorant of the more brilliant than solid distinction: that *Tasso* is the best poet, but *ARIOSTO* the greatest. Now, knowing all this, how can you imagine, that

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I should venture to arrogate to myself, sufficient authority to resolve this question, which after so many obstinate literary conflicts, still remains undecided? However, if it is not allowed me in such strifes to sit *pro tribunali*, I may, at least, be permitted to relate, historically, the effects, which I myself have experienced in reading these great poets. When I first began the study of literature, I found the world divided into parties. That illustrious *Lycæum*, into which I had the good fortune to be received, followed that of the Homer of Ferrara, and with that excess of fervor, which usually accompanies such contests. In order to second my poetical inclination, my master recommended to me the perusal and imitation of ARIOSTO; judging his free and natural style to be more likely to feed and fertilize genius, than the servile regularity (as they called it) of his rival. I was persuaded by authority; and the infinite merit of the writer, occupied me afterwards to such a degree, that not satiated with several perusals, I was induced to learn a great part of *Orlando* by heart; and woe to the bold man who dared assert that *Ariosto* could have a rival, or that he was not wholly immaculate! I met

with friends, however, who in order to seduce me, recited from time to time some of the finest passages of the *Jerusalem delivered*, and I found myself extremely affected and delighted by them ; but faithful to my sect, I detested this complacence, and regarded it as one of those sinful inclinations to which corrupt human nature is prone, and which it is our duty to correct : and in this opinion, I passed all those years in which our judgment is the mere imitation of others. At length, arrived at that period in which we begin to combine our own ideas, and weighing them in the scales of justice, yet more from satiety and a desire of change, than hopes of pleasure and profit, I read *Jerusalem delivered*. It is now impossible for me to describe the extraordinary revolution which this perusal occasioned in my mind. The spectacle, which I saw as in a picture, presenting at one view a great and single action, clearly proposed, conducted in a masterly manner, and perfectly completed ; the variety of events which produced and enriched it, without confusion ; the magic of a style that is always clear, sublime, and sonorous ; always ennobling the most common and humble objects ; the vigour of the
 colouring

colouring with which the author compares
 and describes; the seducing evidence with
 which he narrates, and persuades; the truth
 and consistence of the characters, the con-
 nexion of ideas, the learning, judgment,
 and above all things, the wonderful force of
 genius, which instead of being exhausted,
 as generally happens in labours of long con-
 tinuance, is marvellously encreased to the
 last verse of the poem; all these circum-
 stances filled me with a new delight, a
 respectful admiration, a lively remorse for
 my obstinate injustice, and an implacable
 anger against those who imagined *Ariosto* to
 be injured, merely by comparing him with
Tasso. Not but that I still see in him some
 slight marks of human imperfection. But
 who can be said to be exempt from them?
 Can his great predecessor? If *Tasso* some-
 times displeases by too much labour and
 study, *Ariosto* as frequently offends by too
 little. If you would expunge from the one
 a few mean conceits, below the dignity of
 his own mind, you would as readily part
 with incidents in the other that are too pro-
 fligate and indecent for the public eye; and
 if we should wish for less rhetoric in *Godfrey*,
 the amorous tenderness of *Orlando*, would
 give

give us much more pleasure if it were more natural. *Verum operi in longo fas est obrepere somnum*: and it would be a malignant and pedantic vanity to point out with severity the little spots in two such bright luminaries, *quas aut incuria fudit, aut humana parum cavit natura*. All this, you will say, does not answer your question. You wish to know exactly, and clearly, to which of the two you should assign the pre-eminence? I have already, my dear Sir, respectfully declared my utter repugnance to such a daring decision; and in mere obedience, have disclosed to you with the utmost sincerity, in my own way, the emotions which each of these divine poets has occasioned in my mind. If all this does not suffice, take the following result of a late examination of myself upon the subject. If our good father Apollo, in ostentation of his power, were ever capriciously to resolve on making me a great poet, and commanded me openly to confess, which of the two bards I most wished to resemble, I should certainly hesitate in the choice; yet, perhaps my native love of order, exactitude, and system, would at length incline me to TASSO.

To

To what a length has my prattle extended! But I shall not load myself with *your* faults. You have drawn this on yourself, no less by your commands, and the love and esteem which I bear you, than by that eagerness which I ever have to converse with you, and to which you have now supplied me with so fruitful a subject. This essay, however, should not alarm you. My intention from the beginning, circumstanced as I am, necessarily obliged me to speak with discretion. Continue to gratify me with your affection, and to believe me most truly yours.

Vienna, October 10, 1764.

Chronology has hitherto determined the arrangement of Metastasio's correspondence; but with the preceding discussion of the merits of the two great epic poets of Italy, the following Letters seem to connect, as branches of the same river. They shall therefore pursue their course, and leave some previous letters behind, for future insertion. To know the principles upon which this charming writer built his fame, must gratify the curiosity, even of those who peruse his works for mere Amusement; but to others, who interest themselves

themselves in the cultivation of the musical drama, either as poets or composers, they may afford Instruction.

L E T T E R VI.

TO THE CHEVALIER DE CHASTELLUX,
AT LANDAU.

You were not mistaken, Sir, when you imagined that the perusal of your 'learned and philosophical little treatise, upon *the union of music and poetry*, would surprise me. This essay is sufficient to manifest the extent of your acute, exact, and sound judgment; as well as the solid, unpedantic cultivation of your happy talents. There is no Italian, or at least none that is arrived at my knowledge, who has hitherto penetrated in his meditations so near the primary source of that lively and delicate pleasure, which the system of our musical drama produces, and which it is capable of producing still more effectually (q).

(q) ALGAROTTI's *Saggio dell' opera in Musica*, PLANELLI, *dell'opera in Musica*, ARTEAGA *Rivoluzioni del Teatro Musicale*; had not then appeared.

The

The true, ingenious, and minute analysis which you have given of the *Rhythmus* or *vocal period* in our airs; the clear and masterly manner in which you have described the necessity of not loading or disguising the principal subject of these, with unnecessary ornaments, availing yourself of the new simile of the *naked figure*, of which the limbs ought to be discoverable through all the pomp of dress; the transitions which you have described in passing from simple recitative, to accompanied, by imitating the natural progress of the passions; these, and other passages of your learned dissertation (which I pass over in order to avoid transcribing the whole Book) are luminaries not only valuable for their own splendor, but still more, for the immense territory which they discover to those who know how to avail themselves of them in more distant voyages. I congratulate you sincerely on your success; and from myself, as an Italian and an author, you are entitled to a double portion of thanks. Yet, extremely jealous of the partiality of so enlightened a judge, as a poet, I should have wished, that our poetry should not have had to envy the too great favour which you bestow on your music; as I am alarmed at finding you

regard

regard *that* as the *principal object* of a drama; and attributing its advancement to the partnership between them being *totally dissolved*. Believe me, most respected Chevalier, whenever music aspires at the pre-eminence over poetry in a drama, she destroys both that and herself. It would be too great an absurdity for the cloaths to dispute the superiority with the person for whom they are made. I know by daily experience, that my own dramas are much more certain of success in Italy, when declaimed by comedians, than when sung by musicians (r). Now it is to be proved, whether the most exquisite music of an opera, would succeed if detached from the words. *Airs* which are stiled *bravura*, of which you condemn the too frequent use, constitute the whole force of our music,

(r) When and where the dramas of our Author had been so successfully *declaimed*, without Music, previous to this period, I know not; but in the year 1770, when I visited the principal cities of Italy, in search of information on every thing that concerned Music and Theatres, I heard of no successful dramatic representations, *without Music*. I make no doubt but that the assertion of the good Metastasio, was well founded; but if his dramas had ever been better received in Italy, without Music than with, it must have been at a period previous to my arrival in that country.

which

which is trying to detach itself from poetry. In such airs, no attention is paid to character, situation, feeling, sense or reason; and merely ostentatious of its own power of imitating violins and nightingales, it has only been able to communicate that pleasure which arises from surprise; and of acquiring the same applause which is justly bestowed on a rope-dancer, or a tumbler, who is able, by tricks and dexterity, to surpass common expectation. Modern music, proud of such success, has daringly rebelled against poetry; and neglecting true expression, and regarding all attention to words, as a downright slavery, has indulged herself, in spite of common sense, in every kind of caprice and extravagance; making the theatre no longer resound with any other applause, than that of these *arie di bravura*; with the vain inundation of which, she has hastened her own disgrace; after having, by her mad rebellion, first occasioned that of the miserably lacerated, disfigured, and ruined drama (r).

Pleasures

(r) If (I cannot help repeating) thirty years ago, Metastasio was tired and disgusted with the abuse of *execution*, commonly called *bravura*, in vocal Music, what would he say now? The evil has certainly had a most rapid increase

Pleasures which are unable to gratify the mind, or touch the heart, are of short duration ; for though men corporally suffer themselves to be easily captivated by unexpected mechanical sensations, they do not for ever renounce their reasoning faculties. In short, this vicious taste is at present indulged to such an intolerable excess, that I shall either soon consent that this fugitive servant shall be placed anew under a tutoreſs, who can ſo well embellish her, or elſe, entirely ſeparating muſic from dramatic poetry, let poetry content herſelf with her own native melody, ſuch as good poets never fail to furniſh ; and let the other be employed in tuning the various voices of a chorus, in regulating the harmony of a concert, or guiding the ſteps of a dance, but without ever again putting on the buſkin.

increase ſince this letter was written ; for now ſcarce any other excellence (as ſome think it) is aſpired at, but *rapidity*, and ſplitting notes into halves. Indeed, the *diatonic* ſcale is in danger of being as entirely loſt, and its exiſtence diſputed (particularly in pieces for keyed-inſtruments) as the *Enharmonic genus* of the ancient Greeks. Even *TIME* or *RHYTHM*, the *τὸ μέτρον* of the Greeks, and all ſenſe of regular and exact meaſure, ſeem in equal danger from the exceſſive uſe of the modern refinement called *RALLEN-
TANDO*.

I ſhould

I should not soon be tired of reasoning with you, Sir, on this subject; but, my necessary avocations, rob me of all leisure for pleasures of this kind; therefore hoping, by my obedience, to have merited in some degree the continuance of that favourable propensity with which you have hitherto honoured me, unsolicited, I remain, deeply impressed with gratitude and respect, Sir, &c.

Vienna, July 15, 1765.

L E T T E R VII.

TO THE SAME CHEVALIER, AT PARIS.

IF I had a few Olympiads less on my shoulders, the strength, learning, eloquence, and grace, with which you have defended the cause of music in your last letter, would have induced me to abandon every other employment for the study of that art. But in our time, a man would not be regarded with great reverence, who had always a Lyre in his hand, as was the case formerly in Greece, when it was deemed an ornament, not only to poets, but philosophers and kings. However, it is a great consolation to me, for my insufficiency, to perceive

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that

that we accord in sentiment : a circumstance of which I am very ambitious, as the most solid support of my opinions. We are, therefore, perfectly agreed in regarding music as an ingenious, admirable, delightful, enchantress; capable of producing wonders by herself, and, when accompanied by poetry, and willing to make a good use of her immense riches, able not only to awaken and express her imitations, but to illustrate and enforce every emotion of the human heart.

But at the same time, may we not agree to confess, that, at present, the professors of this charming art, are guilty of enormous abuses; making a senseless use of their seducing powers of execution, out of time and place : often imitating the fury of a tempest, when they ought to express the tranquillity of a calm, and the riotous joy of the *Bacchæ*, instead of the humble grief of the *Troades*, or *Supplicants* (t). Hence, the bewildered audience, affected at the same time by passions in the music, so opposite to those of the poetry, which, instead of assisting, confound each other, can follow neither; but is re-

(t) These are all Tragedies of EURIPIDES: The *Bacchanals*, the *Trojan Dames*, and the *Supplicants*.

duced to the more mechanical pleasure which arises from harmonical proportions, and the compass and agility of a wonderful voice.

I could forgive a composer such an intolerable abuse, if the resources of his art were few; nor would the impatience for displaying those few resources on all occasions be so strange; but, as there is no human passion which cannot be feelingly expressed, and marvellously embellished by this beautiful art, in ways innumerable, why should such wanton insults upon reason be suffered? Now you see, Sir, that I am equally partial to music with yourself; and however I may detest the present dramatical music, I only mean to speak of our own modern artists who disfigure it.

But a much more efficacious motive for consolation is afforded me, by the familiarity which your last letter discovers you to have had with the Greek Theatre. A familiarity that insures concord in our opinions.

You have before learnedly observed, Sir, that the primitive fathers of Tragedy, in order to furnish music with opportunities for displaying its beauties, and to vary the expression, sometimes changed in the mouths

of the characters the usual Iambics into Anapaests, and trochees ; nor has it escaped you that the personages themselves sung alone, with each other, and in dialogue with the chorus, *Strophes*, *Antistrophes*, and *Epods*; measures which naturally require that species of music which we now apply to air, and which you in a masterly manner have called *periodical*: hence, by a necessary consequence, you will conclude, that in flattering the effeminate ears of the audience with *Arietti*, we have, doubtless, illustrious ancient and great authority, both for *Air* and *Recitative*, no less than the Romans for their *Cantica*, and *Diverbia*. Nor is the Greek appellation of *Strophe* a slight proof of the high descent of airs: as both the learned and common people, with us, call the various metres of our *Airs* and *Canzoni*, by no other title.

Imagine not, Sir, that your exhortations are forgotten. You wish, that as there is a *republic of letters*, there should be a *republic of arts*; and, consequently, that poetry, music, and the other sisters, should live amicably together, in perfect independence. For my own part, to confess the truth, I am no republican. *I cannot give this form of government the preference, because it boasts of having*
virtue

virtue only for its support. It appears to me, that all forms are subject to destructive infirmities. I am seduced by the venerable example of supreme paternal authority; nor has the axiom, that the most simple and uncompounded machines are the most perfect and durable, ever been confuted. However, there is no concession which I would not make, to coincide with your sentiments. I am therefore ready, since you will have it so, to become a republican. But you know that the most jealous of all republicans, the Romans, persuaded of the advantage of authority united in one person, during times of difficulty, elected a Dictator; and that, when it was erroneously thought expedient to divide this absolute authority between Fabius and Minucius, they ran a great risk of ruining the state.

The production of a drama, in which all the fine arts concur, is an extreme difficult enterprize. These, as much as possible to secure success, agree to elect a Dictator. Does music aspire at this supreme magistrature? Let it by all means be granted to her. But in that case, she must take upon herself the choice of the subject; conduct of the fable, must determine the number of personages to be introduced; the characters,

and situations, must likewise imagine the decorations, and then invent her melodies; and lastly, appoint poetry to write verses that shall suit all these designs. Now, if music refuses to do this, on account of the numerous faculties necessary to the perfection of a drama, the only science which she possesses being that of sound, she leaves the dictatorship, to whom ever has them all; and in the imitation of Minucius, she will confess herself unable at once to command and to obey. On the other hand, if poetry should only be allowed the title of occasional servant, she must inevitably become a rebellious *republican*.

I know that there is in France, a theatre distinguished by the name of *Lyric*, where, because the dramas are sung, you imagine the supremacy naturally belongs to music. But this circumstance never constituted among the ancients a distinct theatre. Of the six necessary constituent parts of Tragedy, that is, among those which are not merely occasional, but which are necessary throughout a piece, such as, the *fable*, *characters*, *eloquence*, *speeches*, and *decorations*, Aristotle mentions, though in the last place, MUSIC.

And

And in fact, it is difficult to speak to the public, and be clearly understood, without elevating, enforcing and sustaining the voice, much more than in common speech. And this augmentation of voice, requires an art to regulate its proportions; otherwise sounds would be produced that are ill modulated, disagreeable, and often ridiculous. This art is no other than that of Music, so necessary to those who address themselves to a distant audience, that when the performers can procure none from artists destined to compose it, they are obliged to form a natural melody for themselves, under the title of declamation. But still, if a real distinction should be made between a musical theatre, and a play-house, though both dramatic; if to the former should be assigned the distinct attribute of Pindar, Horace, and their followers, the rights of music would not acquire greater weight. If in this Lyric theatre, an action is represented, if a fable is interwoven and unravelled, if there are personages and characters to be supported, music is in the house of another, and cannot be called the mistress.

But I am obliged, most worthy Sir, to finish; which I should not have been able

so soon to do : such is the profit and pleasure I feel in the free communication of my thoughts, to a person so learned, reasonable, and so partial as you manifest yourself towards me ; did not my indispensable duties call me to other labours. If ever they should allow me sufficient leisure to arrange my extracts from the poetics of Aristotle, which I have long been meditating, I shall then communicate the various observations which I have made, for my own private instruction, upon all the Greek dramatists, and those which the experience of half a century, without the merit of any peculiar perspicacity, ought to have suggested to me. But on condition, that the same thing shall not happen to this letter as to the first which I addressed to you : I mean the being printed, without my consent (u). The opinion which I oppose to the reigning taste, however just and unanswerable, will never be admitted without contention ; and to contend, my dear Chevalier, is a business to which I am not inclined by temperament,

(u) Metastasio's former letter in reply to the Chevalier de Chastellux, was first printed in the *Gazette littéraire*, at Paris, and afterwards published in the Dutch Edit. of that Periodical Work.

qualified

qualified by practice, fitted by situation, or a willingness to bestow upon it that leisure for which I have so great occasion. It is a business in which you must have observed, that the most clamorous disputes, and most learned absurdities, pass for reason; and is, in short, a trade which usually degenerates into abuse, and which either requires too much forbearance to suffer, or too much scurrility to return. I know not how to quit you? but my august and venerated Sovereign, from excess of clemency, not being yet tired of my *nugæ canoræ*, sends me hastily to Parnassus, and I must relinquish every thing else to obey her; thus in despite of Horace, who shouts in my ear;

*Solve senescentem mature sanus equum, ne
Peccet ad extremum ridendus, et ilia ducat.*

Loose from the rapid Car your aged horse,
Left in the race derided, left behind,
He drag his jaded limbs, and burst his wind.

FRANCIS.

I am, with due respect, &c,

Vienna, January 14, 1766.

The two preceding letters to the *Chevalier de Chastellux* seem to require a commentary,

as

as they relate to a musical controversy, not generally known in England,

The Chevalier de Chastellux, was an officer in the French guards, when he published his ingenious *Essay on the union of poetry and music* (w). He was afterwards advanced to the rank of Brigadier-general, and served with great zeal and activity on the side of the Americans, in the late war. Previous to which, he had distinguished himself so much in literature, and taste in the fine arts, that, in 1775, he was received into the French Academy.

His *Essay*, of which he had sent a copy to Metastasio, was the consequence of a voyage into Italy, where he seems to have adopted an exclusive taste for the dramatic music of that country, as Rousseau had done before. Indeed, he adopted some of Rousseau's ideas upon music; but, in general, he thinks for himself, both deeply and originally. By his reflections on the musical drama, he not only offended the musicians of France, but the Lyric poets of every country: not scrupling to assert, that in an OPERA "*Musical*," which ought to be *the principal consideration*, had been too long a slave to syllables; for

(w) *Essai sur l'union de la Poésie et de la Musique.*

à la Hay, 1765.

since

since the cultivation of the *Melo-drama*, it was found that music had its own language, its tropes, metaphors, colouring, movements, passions, and expression of sentiment.

This little tract gave birth to a long controversy in France, in which the author was abetted by the *Abbé Arnaud*, the late *M. D'Alembert*, the *Abbé Morellet*, and *M. Mar-montel*. His chief antagonist was the author of a *Treatise on the Melo-Drama*; who, loving poetry better than music, wished to reduce the opera to a mere recitative or musical declamation. During the subsequent feuds between the *Gluckists* and *Pic-cinists*, the opponents of the *Chevalier de Chastellux* enlisted with the former, and his friends with the latter of these sects.

The Essay in question, is certainly humiliating to Lyric poets; but will only seem *unreasonable*, perhaps to them and to those who prefer declamation to singing. To others, the author will appear possessed of good taste, and sound reasoning. Indeed he was the first French writer, after *Roussseau*, who saw the merit of *Metastasio*, and had a true idea of Italian music, and Lyric poetry. *M. de Chastellux*, wished that poets should become musicians, and musicians poets. It is

is not every man of wit and rhyme, who can write a song fit for any other music than that of a ballad. An air to be simple, characteristic, and impressive, should have words to express, that illustrate one single idea, whether sorrowful, gay, solemn, or sportive. The verse should not be more regularly measured, or lines ending with the same rhymes more correspondent, than the air should be phrased and symmetric, except in violent agitation, or moments of frantic passion.

What Metastasio says of *bravura*, or airs of mere execution, is most true. These, and high notes, have of late, however, been made so common, "that they cease even to *surprise*, all they ever could do." Yet, however Metastasio wished to simplify dramatic music, it was not his intention, like French reformers, to strip it of all ornament. Introductory symphonies, impassioned divisions, and even a *cadence*, now and then, by a great singer, in the style of the song he has been singing, and as a supplement to the melody, or rather an *essence* of the composition collected into a narrow compass, he did not disapprove.

In his remarks on the poetics of Aristotle (*x*), where it appears that the ancient

(*x*) To XVI. p. 40. Edit. of Venice, 1783.

dramas, like modern operas, were entirely sung, he has honoured music with a strong and elegant eulogy. "Who can doubt," says he, "of the power of music over the human mind? Who has not observed its effects on himself and others? Who needs be told, that our violent passion for this art, has connected it with all human actions? In the sacred service of the temple, in festive meetings, funeral pomp, and even in military fury, music has a considerable share (y). Its power is felt by the most rude and savage people; the most tender and helpless infants attend to it in the cradle, and cease their complaints; the felon in the dungeon, and even the slave in chains, when labouring at the oar, seeks for solace, and finds it in song."

Cruce sonant ferro, sed canit inter opus.

TIBULLUS.

Nor can compulsive labour check his strains,
Or the harsh rattle of his galling chains.

Our Bard, indeed, does not reason quite fairly, when, in order to prove the superiority of poetry to music, he says, that his own

(y) A coincidence of opinion, in speaking of the many different purposes to which music is applied, luckily happened in the Preface to *The Present State of Music in France and Italy*, long before the Bard's Sentiments on the subject could be known by the Author.

dramas

dramas are well received in Italy when declaimed *without* music; but that the most exquisite music which has been set to them would not be equally favoured *without the poetry*. A kind of music of which the greatest part is recitative, would never have been composed, if words had been out of the question; but, a *Concert* of mere *instrumental music*, consisting of Solos, Duets, Trios, Quartetts, and full pieces, well composed, and exquisitely performed, have often afforded great delight to an audience, without the assistance of words to explain their meaning. But when there *is* singing in a concert, who attends to the poetry? Or what is there to excite attention, except the unconnected words of a single air, or the fragment of an opera scene, generally in an unknown tongue? If bad music spoils a good drama, good composition and performance, have saved many a one that is ill written. With respect to the controversy between the *Chevalier de Chastellux*, and his antagonist, the author of the *Traité du melo-drame*, I will not venture to pronounce, that either of these disputants is perfectly right; or that each may not sometimes truly say: "Brother, brother, we are both in the wrong." But I will
frankly

frankly confess, that I have received great pleasure, though of different kinds, from the operas of Metastasio, on the old model, by Jomelli, Piccini, Sacchini, Sarti and Pacsiello, and from those of Gluck on the new. The brilliant and beautiful parts of the music and singing in the one, have rendered me as charitable as inattentive to the rest; while the general and continued interest of the other made me forget the beauties of introductory symphonies, the dexterity of difficult divisions, and the genius, art, and extempore powers of long closes.

And yet, perhaps, an interesting drama well set by a composer, who respects the poetry, without sacrificing his own art and the performers, if singers of the first class, with whom the French are but little acquainted, would be a more perfect exhibition, than it is possible ever to render an opera, by adhering strictly either to the *Piccini* or *Gluckists*.

We shall now return to Metastasio's correspondence with his friend Filipponi, which furnishes us with some particulars relative to his poetical employments, and the history of his court at this period, which we have not found elsewhere.

L E T.

LETTER VIII.

TO SIGNOR FILIPPONI.

I HAVE been long tormented, my dear friend, by remorse for the sin of omission towards you. It has run in my head, that one of your letters, which arrived during my late voyages to Parnassus, between which not a moment was allowed me to breathe, had been left unanswered. Of these voyages, and the haste with which I travelled, I shall give no account, lest the remembrance of them should renew my sufferings. But in examining all the letters which I was necessitated to leave unanswered, I am unable to find yours; and as I am likewise unable to account for its loss, I begin to suspect that there was no foundation for my remorse; but if there had been, I believe there would be no occasion for excuses to you, who having known me *teneris unguiculis*, can read my heart, and will therefore never so far injure it, as to think me capable of any diminution in a friendship built on so solid a foundation. You are no stranger in Parnassus, and know
how

how much our ideas are absorbed during hasty journeys thither, taken at the pleasure of others; particularly those of a man who has already dirtied, with his *nugæ canoræ*, more than ten volumes. Not having it in my power to write to you, I have at least had the pleasure to consign to the care of the eldest son of our good *Count Canale*, at Inspruch, where I then was, a copy of my new drama (z), to be trusted to the care of some person, in the suit of the Duke of *Chablais*. I could not so easily have forwarded it from Vienna, unless by the post, the expence of which being here not very discreet, perhaps less so at Turin, would have far exceeded the intrinsic value of the gift. I have no doubt but that the Chevalier has seconded my wishes; particularly as I have not neglected to request the Countess *Louisa*, his sister, to remind him of my commission. Comfort me with good news of your health, and of that of the obliging *Priestess*, whom I always modestly embrace, as well as yourself.

P. S. I open my letter, which was sealed yesterday, before I had received the unex-

(z) This was ROMOLO, set by *Haffe*, and performed before their Imperial Majesties at Inspruch, on occasion of the Nuptials of the Archduke LEOPOLD, (the late Emperor,) with the Infanta MARIA LOUISA of BOURBON.

pected tidings of the irreparable loss which we have sustained, by the death of our Emperor and father, Francis the First; oh, my dear friend, it is impossible for you to imagine, how truly he merited our affection, and what will be the public desolation! Think of it, and pity us!

Vienna, August 22, 1765.

This prince, who was in England, and visited Sir Robert Walpole, at Houghton, in 1734, where the sumptuous embroidered velvet-bed that was put up on the occasion, is still called the *Lorrain-bed*, was born in 1708, and married to the Arch-duchess *Maria Theresa*, afterwards the Empress-queen, in 1736, four years before the death of the Emperor Charles VI. after which he disputed the Imperial crown with Charles VII. which, however, he did not acquire till 1745, upon the decease of his competitor. The horrors of war, at this time, desolated all Europe; and though the peace of Aix-la-Chapelle in 1747, restored tranquillity to the empire; yet a new war broke out in 1756, which was not terminated till 1763, by the treaty of Hubusburg, in Saxony. The
Emperor

Emperor Francis, availed himself of the happy leisure which this peace afforded him, to regulate his finances, and encourage commerce, sciences, and arts, in all his dominions. He died suddenly at *Innsbruck*, regretted by his family and subjects, as one of the best princes that had ever governed the Empire. Humanity, say historians, which was his principal characteristic, did not diminish his valour, in his conflicts with the enemies of the country over which he reigned; and, in the wars of Hungary and Bohemia, he frequently signalized himself by his bravery. If, like the Egyptian kings, this prince had been tried by his subjects after his decease, from what I was able to discover of their sentiments seven years after, he would have been honourably acquitted of the crimes usually ascribed to Monarchs, when death has robbed them of power, splendor, and self-defence.

LETTER IX.

TO SIG. FILIPPONI.

I NEVER doubted, my dear friend, of your discretion. You have too long been an inhabitant of my heart, to be ignorant of any

of its most inward recesses ; and none but an utter stranger to it could attribute the long silence for which I justified myself in my last letter, to indifference. Nothing is more true, than that since the first nuptials of our present Emperor, I have been scrambling in Parnassus, for what, after the many visits I have made there, I did not dare to promise myself would be tolerated by the public ; so that the favourable reception of my *Romolo ed Ersilia*, comforted me beyond all expectation. Your approbation always pleases me, and I am grateful for it ; but so friendly a judge still leaves doubts of the merits of my labours. I am far more anxious (begging your pardon) concerning the favour of the nymphs of the *Dora (a)*, of which, according to your assertion, I have reason to be proud. These, unluckily, cannot, like you, be seduced by personal partiality for the author, and where tenderness and affection are in question, are practical judges, much more competent than Aristotle and Plato. I have some inedited compositions, but am not yet allowed to commit them to your royal press, as they are written for the Arch-dutcheßes ;

(a) A river that empties itself in the Po, near Turin.

and

and have not yet been produced, nor heaven knows, considering the melancholy circumstances of our court, whether they will ever be produced. I have likewise to inform you, that I have been obliged to write a long *Serenata* for the nuptials of the Prince of Asturias. The performance of which is likewise deferred at Madrid, on account of the double mourning, till the end of the present year. You have an *Infanta* there; so that by means of some friend at that court, you may procure an early copy for the 10th volume, whenever it is printed and published. The title of the piece is, *La pace fra le tre Dee* (*b*).

Vienna, October 10, 1765.

LETTER X.

TO THE SAME.

YOUR most welcome letter of the 12th of last April, found me at the instant of my

(*b*) Written for the nuptials of their royal highnesses D. CARLOS of BOURBON, Prince of Asturias, (the present King of Spain) and the Princess Louisa of Parma, in 1765.

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return

return from a second excursion to Parnassus, made by a sovereign command, after that which I informed you, I had already made for the Iberian nuptials. You see plainly, that being obliged to take this journey after so many preceding expeditions lately, to the same place, without having time allowed to breathe, entitles me to some indulgence for involuntary neglect of friends. My *Serenata* for the court of Madrid, arrived at the place of its destination, by means of the Spanish Ambassador. It was received very graciously, and applauded much more than it deserved. You will find by the public news-papers, which only speak the truth, that I received from the hands of the same ambassador, a present from his court of five large vases of exquisite snuff: four of silvery, and one of gold, ornamented with the royal arms, elegantly engraved upon the cover.

Now this *Serenata*, (unless privately, of which I am utterly ignorant) has never yet been performed. The reason for this I am unable to divine: perhaps the director not having engaged fingers in time, as the Duke of *Medina Celi* had done, in Italy, it will be unprovided of performers, when wanted; and, in fact, the D. of *Medina Celi* had given

commission

commission to Farinelli, at Bologna, to seek,
 engage, direct, and send singers male and
 female into Spain, before I was desired to
 write the *Serenata* ; and I have never heard
 that any such commission was given in Italy
 by the court. Hence, being ignorant for
 whom I was to draw the characters in my
 drama, and as I was not sufficiently anxious
 to make much enquiry, in order to adapt
 the parts to their particular talents, I have
 been obliged to write at random, and in an
 incredible hurry. But whatever may have
 been the occasion of this piece not having
 been performed, (which I have no inclina-
 tion to investigate) as it is not yet published
 at Madrid, it does not seem decent that any
 printer should be furnished with a copy of it
 by me, though it seems to be one of my pro-
 ductions for which I have the least occasion
 to be ashamed. The best part of the story
 is, that besides this, there are four other of
 my compositions which, for various reasons,
 cannot yet see the light ; so that imitating
 my own patience, your royal press must re-
 main quiet for some time ; and even when
 set to work again, it must not expect from
 me a *preface* to the additions I shall furnish ;
 as I am wholly ignorant what to say in it,

unless, like many other authors, I were, in the printer's name, to stuff it with my own praises.

Vienna, May 1, 1766.

LETTER XI.

TO THE SAME.

THE exactness with which the press has been corrected, as far as types are concerned, resembles Alcina's nose, in which *non trova l'invidia, ove l'emende*, "Envy herself could find no fault;" and it is an incontestible proof of the affectionate zeal and diligence of the dear and friendly revisor to whom, with a hundred tender embraces, I render all due thanks. I am not surprised that this composition, being mine, has pleased you; but what could I write which would not be favoured with the approbation of so partial a judge to me, as my most constant Sig. Filipponi has always been? But even your mistakes give me comfort, as proofs of that affection which occasions them. I depend on the eloquence of my good Court Canale to display the sincere gratitude and respect

respect which I feel for the worthy Chevalier RAIBERTI, who has so obligingly offered to attend the press of the projected elegant edition of my works ; but if you have an opportunity, I beg of you to present my thanks without the fear of overdoing it ; as they can never be so often repeated as I could wish.

Signor — wrote to me long since, a fine letter in blank verse, from which both myself and friends formed a very favourable opinion of his talents and learning ; but the drama, my dear friend, is a literary province so perilous, that few get through it with whole bones. The continual expectation of encomiums under the name of corrections and opinions, throw me frequently into the disagreeable necessity of betraying either truth and my friend ; or of wounding his mind with a sincerity, that can never be rendered tolerable by the most guarded and delicate expressions which language can furnish. If, with the assistance of the Chevalier Raiberti, you could dissuade Signor — from involving me in such difficulties, I should be eternally obliged to you ; but for heaven's sake do it in such a manner as not to discover to him my repugnance ; otherwise

wife

wife the new inconvenience would be worse than that which I am trying to avoid.

I should add many things concerning all your amiable family, but neither my time nor paper will allow it. Therefore, I must embrace you all *in solidum*.

Vienna, July 29, 1766.

L E T T E R X I I .

TO THE SAME.

I INTEREST myself so much the more, my dear friend, in the rheumatic sufferings which you so feelingly describe in your letter, as I am frequently struggling with the same malady myself, and therefore know all the graces and allurements of such companions. I comfort myself in finding that, for the present, you have valiantly subdued them; but hope you will not acquire a taste for such bad company.

If the courageous Sig. *Rabj* determines to undertake a new impression of my works, with the projected magnificence, I shall pray to Mercury for his success, and give him every assistance in my power, at so great a distance.

distance. If he is only in want of materials for a tenth volume, the inclosed memorandums will convince you, that there are more than sufficient for that purpose ; which I shall transmit as soon as I am able, corrected and polished for his use.

It is necessary, in the mean time, to give you two pieces of advice : the first is, that this new volume, which at present we call the tenth, ought, in the edition under meditation, to be the ninth, and that which in the former edition, was the ninth, the tenth ; in order that those pieces which I produced in my early youth, with the table of contents and index of the airs, may still be in the last volume.

The second thing which I have to inform you, is, that since the sumptuous and public present that was made me from Spain, for the *Serenata*, entitled *La pace fra le tre Dee*, written for the nuptials of the Prince of Asturias, I have never had the least information concerning that production. I cannot therefore, in delicacy and propriety, send it to the press, before I am certain that it has been printed at Madrid ; and the same delicacy forbids my making any enquiry about it.

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The drama with which I was threatened, is not yet arrived; may Apollo, in his mercy, preserve me from such a misfortune! Adieu.

Vienna, October 6, 1766.

L E T T E R XIII.

TO THE SAME.

THE protest in your last letter, against the persecution of tiresome compliments of the season, was only made politically, in order to deprecate my vengeance, and prevent me from sending you a furious philippic on the occasion, for a practice so inconvenient to society, and so unnecessary among true friends. You have been so long in possession of my heart, that the almost immemorable prescription would resist a *fiery furnace*, and you would think unjustly of yourself and of me, if you should imagine such miserable ceremonies necessary for the preservation of our friendship, as are now justly regarded among the most teizing evils of civil society. If it is not too late, let me beg of you to suggest to the person employed to procure a
copy

copy of my serenata, *La pace fra le tre Dee* at Madrid, to address himself particularly to the first major-domo of the Prince of Asturias; at whose house I am told it has been performed; as his Catholic majesty will suffer no music in his palace (c). This information may not be true; but the hint can do no harm, if false, or superabundant. Believe me ever yours, with all my ancient affectionate and constant friendship.

Vienna, January 15, 1767.

LETTER XIV.

TO THE SAME.

THE interest which you take in my solicitude concerning the safe arrival of my dear Count Canale, is a proof of your kind and good heart; and I am extremely grateful for the information with which you have favoured me on that subject. Take, my delightful friend, the further trouble of informing him of my affection and reve-

(c) This was the late King of Spain, Charles III. who on his accession to the crown, drove the modest and in-oxious Farinelli from Madrid.

rence;

tence ; and do not forget to tell him, that our crippled triumvirate bitterly feels his absence (d).

Vienna, September 28, 1767.

We shall now resume the correspondence with Farinelli, for whom the affection of Metastasio seems to have been sincere and constant. And from the time of his losing his royal Patrons in Spain, together with his splendid situation at that court, the poet appears to have interested himself very much in tranquillizing his mind, and reconciling him to his more humble situation.

LETTER XV.

TO FARINELLI.

THE harmonical caravan is on the point of departing for Inspruch. Think, my dear Gemello, what my poor hypochondriac head must suffer. In spite of all this tumult, I cannot help loading the worthy Signor Becchetti with some bales of embraces, saluta-

(d) This triumvirate consisted, when entire, of *Count Canale*, *Baron Hagen*, and the Imperial Laureat.

tions,

tions, and affectionate expressions of kindness, to be carefully consigned to my amiable Gemello ; congratulating him on the amendment of his spirits, which I have discovered by a chearful letter that he has written to Signor *Becchetti*, whose company I have not been able to enjoy so much as I wished, on account of my constant occupations. I saw pass through this city, like lightning, our old *Petrillo*, with his young wife, and admire the scion graft : she has not however had time to attempt the cure of the eloquent fluxion to which he is subject. But, my dear Gemello, these are incurable infirmities. They depend on the structure of the machine, which can only be corrected by the great author who has made it. Adieu, continue to tranquillize yourself, and to love as you have hitherto done, your Metafasio.

Vienna, May 31, 1765.

L E T T E R XVI.

TO THE SAME.

I AM extremely obliged to our dear *Becchetti* for his great punctuality in delivering

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to you the embraces, salutations, and tender expressions with which I loaded him, on your account, when he quitted this court. I beg you will tell him how grateful I feel, and return him my best thanks for his complacency and kindness.

You know, my dear Gemello, that I am a kind of duck, that remains in the water without being wet. During almost thirty-six years residence in a court, I have never been able to acquire either the mysterious air, or pompous exterior, which generally reigns there, or that learned dissimulation which borders on fraud. Permit me therefore, with the sincerity and frankness of a friend, historically to open to you my whole heart.

From the time in which I was immersed in the nuptial festivals of our king of the Romans, there began to be propagated a rumour, that you were to go to Madrid to conduct the entertainments to be given in celebration of the marriage of the Prince of Asturias. This rumour encreased by little and little, to such a degree, that it was believed by the court, city, and public in general. I, who had received a letter from you without the least hint at such a journey, was the only person who refused to give credit

credit to this report. And to the many questions that were asked me on the occasion, as your acknowledged Gemello, I constantly and truly answered: that *you had never given me the least information of any such design: and that, therefore, I gave no kind of credit to any such rumour.* Our riotous festivals were but just finished, when tired, out of breath, and rendering thanks to father Apollo, that the time was now come when I should be allowed leisure to breathe, comes the Spanish Ambassador to whisper in my ear the wish of his court, to have a *Serenata* for the nuptials of the Prince of Asturias. You may well imagine my situation. I said, that though I was already prepared for the opera at Inspruch, I was by no means certain that I should not receive some new command from my august Patroness. The Ambassador replied, that he had already spoken to my sovereign. I then, certain that an absolute command would rob me of the merit of a voluntary compliance, bowed the head to the decree of fate, with very little expectation that, in my tired and exhausted state, I should be able to perform the task which was unexpectedly obtruded

upon me, in a manner worthy of the honour intended me by the court of Spain.

And here I must confess to you, that in reflecting on the rumour which had been spread concerning your journey, I did not firmly believe, but at least violently suspected, that you were the innocent cause of all my present embarrassment. In short, to complete the business, my excuse to the Spanish Ambassador became prophetic. My patroness commanded another little drama to be performed by the Archdutchesses, at the return of the court from Inspruch. What could I do in this dilemma? After maturely weighing circumstances, I found that I had nothing else for it, but to invoke the muses, shut my eyes, and patiently wait for their assistance. In the first place, I executed the commands I had received, as was my duty; and then went to work for Spain, and delivered to the ambassador the *Serenata* required, a month before the time allowed me was expired.

While I was balancing with myself whether I should complain to you of the trick which I suspected you had played me, there comes a letter from our friend *Hubner*, at Madrid,

Madrid, to assure me, that you were expected there, and that he was impatient to see and pay his respects again to his benefactor. Now my suspicions became evident truths; and my Gemello was the subject of my complaints and grumbling, for the mystery with which he had acted, and the scrape into which I firmly believed his partiality had led me.

But the melancholy story does not end here. The Spanish ambassador a little while ago, just before his departure for Inspruch, honoured me with a visit, in person, and read me a long and polite letter of thanks from the Marquis Squillaci, *whose name till this moment, no one had ever mentioned*; and the day before yesterday I received your letter of the 5th inst. in which you speak of this affair like a man just arrived in Europe from the country of the great Mogul or Japan. In the midst of such a strange confusion of mystery, information, and conjecture, I have been unable to settle my creed, nor am I indeed, impatient to do it. It is a sufficient satisfaction to my mind, that I have not concealed from my friend the least thought, word, or deed, concerning this rather humiliating transaction.

By the infinite esteem, which I have long felt for *Count Savioli*, the favourite of the Muses, I have always done myself more honour than him. I beg of you to represent to him my lively sense of his partiality: and take care not to confide to him all my insufficiency, lest it should too much diminish the value of that friendship and regard, which through your means, I venture to offer him.

If I had leisure to lengthen my letter, or rather babble, it might perhaps divert your attention from your own evils; but I am just on the point of beginning my daily attendance at Schombrun, in spite of the dog-days, till the return of the court, in order to be present at the rehearsals of our illustrious performers, who do me the honour to think my presence necessary; you will therefore guess that I am not likely to be contaminated by the father of all vices. Adieu. Continue your affection for me, and believe me always with the most invincible obstinacy, yours.

Vienna, July 18, 1765.

L E T-

L E T T E R XVII.

TO THE SAME.

AFTER due thanks for the affectionate and candid return of confidence, which you have been pleased to render me in your very dear letter of the 30th of last July; I have no other to participate with you concerning my Southern composition, or Western, as you please, than that I have not heard a syllable on the subject, since the thanks (of which I told you) that were delivered to me by the Spanish ambassador, before his departure for Inspruch, in the name of the *Marquis Squillaci*; so that your information, at-least for the present, is not exact, as to the circumstances which respect myself in this business.

If my commission has been executed, of which I have no reason to doubt, you will have received, by this time, my new drama of *Romolo ed Ersilia*. I believe I have already told you, that I took care to send you a copy from Inspruch, the moment it ceased to be contraband; a thing which I could not have done so soon, had I been far from the

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court,

court, and consequently from the field of battle. I know that you will receive with tenderness this new little nephew : particularly as my eagerness to send him will convince you how constantly I bear you in my thoughts. Indeed you occupied them constantly when I heard the unexpected news of the unhappy death of the Duke of Parma ; at which time, the first thing that presented itself to my mind, was your affliction, with which my own was sincerely mingled. But you have a stock of prudence, religion, and long and enlightened experience, sufficient to prevent misfortune from taking you by surprise ; so that you will find in Yourself, the most efficacious consolation in such difficult circumstances.

Adieu, my dear Gemello. Remind Count *Savioli*, whenever you have an opportunity, of my respectful esteem ; take care of yourself, and believe me yours to the end of time.

Vienna, August 19, 1765.

L E T-

L E T T E R XVIII.

TO THE SAME.

I RECOGNIZED all the amiable qualities of my dear Gemello, in the consolation which your affectionate letter of the 26th of August afforded me. The tender part which you take in my just affliction, assures me of the place which I hold in your mind. And this certainly convinces me, that all our wretched life is not made up of bitterness. Your commiseration is the more dear to me, as you know better than any one, by experience, whether I am worthy of it. Let us implore divine providence, as it has been pleased to render our tragical misfortunes similar, that, in future, we may resemble each other in happiness. Believe me, in whatever situation we may be thrown, yours,

Vienna, September 9, 1765.

L E T T E R XIX.

TO THE SAME.

I AM not so much surpris'd, as sorry, my dear Gemello, for the disgust which the un-

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grateful

grateful return made by your harmonical caravan has given to yourself and your noble and generous friend, by whom, through your means, they had been chosen, collected, rewarded, and distinguished. Though you are used (as you observe) to the odour of such flowers, I can easily imagine how you must nauseate them, and sincerely pity you.

As yet I know not whether, when, or in what manner, my new nuptial drama, sent last April, will be used on the banks of the *Manzanare*. I can add nothing to what I have already written to you on the occasion, except that the Spanish ambassador, before his departure for *Innspruck*, thanked me for my poem, in the name of the Marquis *Squillaci*, whom he had never mentioned to me before; and added, that a duet was much wished for in the *Serenata*. In order to shew my willingness to oblige, I wrote one in a few hours time; but explained in a short memorial, that as I had never been informed who were to be the performers, there was a chance of my having united two persons in this addendum whose voices would not do well together; and did not conceal my opinion, that a duet could have little effect, performed sitting, and without action, or passion,

passion, as was usually the case in *ferenatas*. I consigned the addition and necessary changes to the ambassador, before his departure. But he returned four days ago from the Tirol, and gave me new thanks, in the name of the Marquis Squillaci, for the duet which he had received. More than this, I am unable to tell you; concerning the affair in question.

If your tormented frame must produce peccant humours, it is fortunate, my dear Gemello, that they should assault the lower regions: as they are there of less consequence; but it would be much better if none were produced. I can easily imagine the patience of which you must stand in need, and I participate in your sufferings.

Adieu; pray send me better news of yourself, and believe me ever, &c.

Vienna, September 14, 1765.

L E T T E R XX.

TO THE SAME,

OUR wandering *Petrillo* being returned from Saxony, with his pretty little wife, who has conceived hopes in northern climes of enriching him with a successor, made me
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two visits : promising to come and see me a third time, to take his last farewell : for this visit I had reserved my usual *vase* of *salutations* to you ; but the barbarian is gone *insalutato ospite*, and I am obliged to inclose them in this letter, which will perhaps perform the office of commissary before his arrival at Bologna. Pray abuse him for me, unmercifully ; and tell him, that I shall never forgive him, if he does not make amends for his negligence, with speedily sending to Milan, the book with which I charged him for Sig. *Migliavacca*,

I have heard nothing more from Madrid, since the delivery of my serenata. I am teased to death by the Roman printers, for a copy of it ; but I cannot send it thither, or any where else, till it has been performed ; and I am determined not to ask the ambassador a single question about it, lest my curiosity should be misconstrued. So that if you should know when it would be published in Spain, that I may give permission for the press to work elsewhere, you will much oblige me,

Adieu, my dear Gemello. Be careful of your health, and believe that I shall never
cease

cease to love and esteem you as you deserve, that is to say, infinitely.

Vienna, October 31, 1765.

LETTER XXI.

TO THE SAME.

My dear Gemello always acts like himself, as well in small things, as on great occasions. The care and activity with which you have acted in forwarding my book to *Signor Migliavacca*, prove how much you interest yourself in the affairs of your friends: so differently from the generality of mankind, who can never detach themselves from that detestable self-love, which confines the whole universe within the narrow limits of their single individuality. I thank you for it, and congratulate myself no less than you on every fresh instance of your disposition, which makes me vain of the early opinion I conceived of your character.

Signor Greppi quitted this city hastily, in order to go to Milan; and fearing, like you, the conjugal distractions of our *Petrillo*, I consigned to the care of this gentleman, a second copy of my book for *Signor Migliavacca*,

Luca, who has not only received, but thanked me for it. He will doubtless have received the other; but there will be no great inconvenience in his having two copies.

I remain in such utter darkness concerning my Southern serenata, that I begin to forget its existence. Your eagerness on the subject far surpasses mine. I am much obliged to you; but I beg you will take no further trouble about it. Say a thousand kind things for me to *Papa Petrillo*, and believe me always, &c.

Vienna, December 12th, 1765.

L E T T E R XXII.

TO THE SAME.

THOUGH quite oppressed with letters, I cannot refrain from answering, at least with brevity, my dear Gemello, and acquainting him, as his last confidentially affectionate letter deserves, that three days ago, the Spanish ambassador, by order of his court, sent me a magnificent present, consisting of fifty pounds of the best Havannah snuff, in five jars, four of silver, and one of gold, with
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the arms of his Catholic Majesty engraved on all the covers. A gift indeed worthy of the Royal munificence of such a monarch. But with all this, I am yet ignorant whether the *Serenata* has yet been published in Madrid: so that I dare not yet send it to my brother at Rome, who is tormented for it by the book-sellers (*e*).

I beg you will present my humble respects to the *Marquis Herculani*, and *Count Savioli*, and assure them how much I am flattered by their partiality. Adieu my dear Gemello, I have time to write no more; but you know, without my trying to persuade you of it, that I am, ever have been, and ever shall be, yours.

Vienna, December 30, 1765.

L E T T E R XXIII.

TO THE SAME.

IF an impertinent defluxion, the fruit in season, and very common here, had not rendered me for some days inactive, my dear Gemello would have suffered in the first

(*e*) This is the last mention that is made of his brother, in any of the letters which have hitherto been published.

transports

transports of my rage, for the formal proof he thought it necessary to give me, of his exactitude in forwarding *Romolo*. Is it possible, after so many years, that you can do me the injustice to suppose, that the receipt of a parcel by my negligent correspondent *Migliavacca*, is of more consequence, than a line from you! Do you not now deserve all the ancient titles of Troglodyte, Anthropophagus, Lestrigon, and Marine monster! But this defluxion subdued my irascibility, and on days of penitence, vengeance must not be indulged. Therefore I embrace you heartily, and forgive you.

Our worthy Count *Rosenburgh*, is now on the banks of the Arno, enjoying the delights of Tuscany, while we are entirely buried in ice and snow, to such a degree, as to be unable to move in the streets, in a boat, a coach, a chair, on foot, or on horseback. Oh! how I long for the spring! But as you will see her in your part of the world, before she comes hither, pray salute her in my name, and urge her on as quick as possible*.

* Though *Ver*, the spring, is of the neuter gender, Metastasio has personified this youthful season, *alla Italiana*, by making it feminine.

Pliny has *Primo vere*, whence the Italian *Primavera*.

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I do not understand the mystery of the *Serenata*, but I respect it. Take care of yourself, my dear Gemello, who are at present certainly not in Norway, and never grow tired of loving me, if it be only in gratitude.

Vienna, February 17, 1766.

L E T T E R XXIV.

TO THE SAME.

You complain, in your last letter of Feb. 21st, of the not having heard from me for a long time; I therefore take it for granted, that my last letter was not received. Perhaps it arrived to make my excuse at the same instant as I received your complaint. I am infinitely obliged to you, my dear Gemello, for the eagerness which you have manifested to give me some information concerning the fate of my *Serenata*; which, by the last news you have sent me, is become more obscure, and inexplicable, than ever. But as I am unable to walk in the dark, I shall not attempt to grope my way among these clouds. And I beg of you not to plague yourself any more on the subject. Rome has already had sufficient time to abate its curiosity, and forget all about it; and I have certainly no wish to excite new attention

attention to it. I shall be very much obliged to you for the copy which you promise me.

I share in all the irregularity of your health; you should therefore, according to rule, partake of mine. But I can assure you, that this diabolical trade of heroism, begins to be very insupportable to me. Believe me, however, in spite of complaints, unceasingly yours.

Vienna, March 6th, 1766.

L E T T E R XXV.

TO THE SAME.

AT length, returning home a few evenings ago, I found on my table, the pleasing Epithalamium of our most worthy *Count Savioli*. I read it with that eagerness which whatever he writes inspires. I admired the art with which, in so masterly a manner, he has united dignity with clearness, nature with elegance, pathos with cheerfulness; and am convinced that there is no recondite corner of Parnassus, with which he is not intimately acquainted. After my respectful compliments, pray congratulate him sincerely, in my name, and stimulate him to be faithful to the muses, by whom he is so much favoured.

And

And for yourself, my dear Gemello, who with such fraternal zeal, have procured me this pleasure, receive in return, my most affectionate and hearty thanks and salutations ; not those which are commonly lavished among persons indifferent to each other, but such as a just esteem, and a long season of friendship inspire.

Vienna, April 17, 1766.

L E T T E R XXVI.

TO THE SAME.

I SHOULD appear unjust to our tender twinship, if I did not communicate to you, (whenever my duty will permit) every little poetical excursion which I am obliged to take. The genealogy therefore of what I now send you, is the following :

In May last, one of the most exalted divinities of our Olympus, stimulated me to write some little consolatory poem, in order to try if it were not possible to seduce our afflicted Sovereign, from that profound and obstinate grief in which she has been so absorbed for the loss of her most august Comfort, as to put her own life in danger. Regarding the mere hint as a com-

mand, I went to work immediately: and my labour was so fortunate, as not only to procure me a generous and unequivocal testimony of beneficent approbation, but inclined my poetical vanity, to enumerate it among the first causes of the dawnings of serenity which began to appear on the countenance of my most august Patroness, after the perusal of my sermon. I know very well, however, that it is no convincing proof to say, that *this event has followed the other, and was produced by it*. But among us inhabitants of Parnassus, we always construe things *in favorabilibus*. This virtuous princess, thinking herself too well treated in the poem, and that the partiality of the writer was too visible, had some repugnance to its being printed here. But *Count Canale*, the Sardinian minister at this court, having obtained a manuscript copy, has privately sent it to Turin, and had it printed there at the royal press. Of the few copies sent hither, merely for the court, foreign ministers, and some particular friends, I have procured this, in order that you may be the first to whom it is communicated at Bologna. Receive it with affection, and give it an attentive perusal: as among other things, you may

may perhaps find something in it not inapplicable to yourself. Adieu, my dear Gemello, take care of your health, and believe me, yours most faithfully.

Vienna, August, 1766.

L E T T E R XXVII.

TO THE SAME.

AMIDST all the confusion into which every one is thrown here, particularly myself, by the small-pox, which has seized the two Empresses: that is, the Empress (wife of the Emperor Joseph,) seven days ago, and yesterday the Empress-queen, I cannot resist the sollicitations of our *Abate Cetrulo*, who wishes to have a letter to present to you, which your friendship for him renders unnecessary. The first of the illustrious invalids is very ill; but it is said, that the disorder of the other, is of the mildest kind. We are however, under the greatest anxiety for her safety. You will readily believe me, when I tell you, that I have neither leisure nor spirits to lengthen my letter. Adieu, my dear Gemello.

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mello. Take care of yourself, and pity your friend.

Vienna, May 17, 1767

L E T T E R XXVIII.

I AM sensibly obliged to our poor persevering pilgrim, who, in spite of all his other labours, remembered to deliver my letter to the dear Gemello. This obliging zeal doubles my prayers to Heaven, that he may return, *mens sana in corpore sano*.

If I had not received your affectionate and sincere assertions, I should not have doubted for a moment of your sympathizing with me, in the terrible anxiety which I felt for the imminent danger of my most revered Patrons: I know your heart, and long-tried tenderness. It is impossible for me to describe the universality of our past dismay and present jubilation. I believe there never were such lively, affectionate, indisputable, and numerous testimonies given before, of a people's love for a Sovereign, as have been manifested here by all ranks for ours. Her most august Son, may serve as a model for
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the children of future times. He has watched her night and day, without quitting her a moment, assisting in the administration of her medicines, and in his care and anxiety for her, totally forgetting himself. You may well imagine how much our respect and love for a prince of such a character are increased.

We must not speak, my dear Gemello, now, of our own complaints; they are too trivial to be mentioned, during this time of universal joy. All I can do, is to beg of heaven to grant us, if not patience, at least fortitude sufficient to combat them. Do you do likewise: but forget not, at the same time, to remember the affection which I have, and ever shall retain for you, to my life's end.

Vienna, July 6th, 1768.

END OF THE SIXTH SECTION.

SECTION VII.

WE shall now quit Farinelli for some time, in order to attend to other correspondents. Among these, there is no one to whom Metastasio seems to write with more affection, than to JOMELLI, the justly celebrated musical composer.

 LETTER I.

TO SIGNOR NICOLA JOMELLI.

AND does my admirable *Jomelli* then remember me! The confirmation of this truth, of which, in spite of your eternal silence, I never doubted, has afforded me a pleasure which I am unable to describe. Indeed I am so much the more delighted with your last dear letter of the 3d of March, as I have so long in vain tried to procure it: having sent you some time ago, my *Aicida al bivio*, by *M. Philip le Rois*; and since that, written you a long prattle, which

ought to have been forwarded to you by *Signora Scotti*, at present the first woman of the opera in England; who, on quitting this court, set off for that of London (*a*). But either my couriers have been to blame, or my dispatches ineffectual; and yet, I am so sure of your affection, and of my occupying an enviable place in your heart, that whatever may happen, I shall never doubt the security of my station.

I regard the two masterly airs with which you have kindly favoured me, as precious gifts: and as far as the limits of my musical knowledge extend, I have admired the new and harmonious texture of the voice and accompaniments, the elegance of the one, and contrivance of the other; and the uncommon unity of the whole, which renders them worthy of your abilities. I must confess, however, my dear Jomelli, that though this style impresses me with respect for the writer,

(*a*) The *Scotti* sung on our opera stage with *Manzoli*, in the season of 1764 and 1765. Her voice was feeble, but her style of singing, face, and figure, were captivating. In these times the serious operas at Vienna, Madrid, and Lisbon, were supported by, and wholly under the direction of the Court; and Metastasio imagining this to have been the case in our capital, says, "that when the *Scotti* quitted the *Court of Vienna*, she set off for that of London."

you have, when you please, another which instantly seizes on the heart, without giving the mind the trouble of reflection (*b*). When I have heard a thousand times, your airs *Non so trovar l'errore*, and *Quando sarà quel dì*, with innumerable others which I cannot now recollect, that are still more seducing, they leave me no longer master of myself, but oblige me in spite of myself, to feel all that you must have felt, in composing them. Ah, my dear *Jomelli*, do not abandon a faculty in which you have not, nor ever will have, a rival. In masterly airs, there may

(*b*) This was the opinion of the Italians in general, concerning the compositions of *Jomelli*, after his residence in Germany; where his rich harmony, and instrumental complication, were perhaps always more admired, than his elegant and simple melody. Five years after this period, it was the opinion of the Neapolitans, that the songs of *Jomelli*, which masters respected for their art, and contrivance, were too elaborate, and gave the hearers too much trouble, to afford them careless delight. Poets are always ready to join in censuring the composers' science, and performer's execution, as equal enemies to the beauties of the poetry, and interest of the drama; but, as the Public is a many-headed animal, with ears of all sorts and sizes, it is to be feared, that some of them will expect learning and science to be displayed by the composer, and powers of execution by the singer, as well as others such artless simplicity, as would reduce an opera to a level with a ballad farce.

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be composers, perhaps, who by dint of pains and labour, will approach you ; but in finding the road to the hearts of others, their own must be formed of fibres as delicate and sensitive as yours, and different from all those who have hitherto dealt in musical notes. It is true, that in writing in this new style (c) you cannot help sometimes expressing the passions in the way which your own happy temperament suggests; but being obliged, in order to support your learned idea, too frequently to interrupt the voice, the impressions already made in the mind of the hearer, are effaced ; and for the reputation of a great master, you neglect that of an amiable, and most powerful musician.

Adieu, my dear, and most worthy friend. If you knew with what occupations I am oppressed, you would be better able to judge of that affectionate regard, which so long prevents me from finishing this letter. Take care of your health, for the honour of the harmonic family. Continue to love me, and believe me to be invariably yours.

Vienna, April 6, 1765.

(c) Meaning his second manner, to which he adhered in Germany.

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The correspondence of the Imperial laureat with Signor SAVERIO MATTEI, upon which we shall now enter, will disclose to the reader, his opinion upon the subjects of poetry, music, criticism, and literature in general, during a period of eleven years, better than any other letters in the collection. Almost every correspondence which Metastasio carried on with authors, and the learned of his time, seems to have been forced upon him, not so much perhaps with a view to obtain his sentiments on literary subjects, as his approbation of the works of which they made him a present. But whether this was the case with Sig. Mattei, an author of great merit still living, we know not; yet we find that the private praise which he received from the great Lyric poet, was eagerly made public, in despite of earnest injunctions to the contrary.

The following letter was written in reply to one, which Metastasio had received from Sig. Mattei, informing him that he had sent him a copy of his translation of the Psalms into Italian verse, with dissertations on Hebrew

brew poetry, and other poetical compositions,

LETTER II.

TO SIGNOR D. SAVERIO MATTEI.

I DEFERRED for one post, the answering your no less lively than obliging letter, hoping every moment, that the Book of Psalms, which you had been so kind to send me would arrive, that I might tell you what my first sensations were in perusing it: but not having yet seen it, I shall not add to the disappointment which such a delay has produced in myself, that which a longer silence would produce in you, to the discredit of my gratitude. I therefore hasten to return you infinite and most sincere thanks, both for the gift which you have been pleased to bestow on me, and for the affectionate and partial depositions of your kind heart in my favour, expressed in prose and in verse, with equal grace and elegance. In the printed poetical Essay which I always peruse, and re-peruse with new pleasure, you have fully shewn with what kind of pindaric pen nature has furnished

furnished you, and how dextrously your application has enabled you to use it. I congratulate you on the possession of such powers, and wish that all those flights which youthful courage and vigour shall stimulate you to take, may be equally happy. Ah ! my dear Sig. *Mattei*, wish not to be possessed of my old and worn-out buskins. You know not how they gall the present wearer, nor what trouble it has cost me to conceal the uneasiness they occasion. Our good fire, Apollo, who has already so highly favoured you, will furnish you with a much better shoemaker. Continue to honour me with your valuable friendship, and believe me to be with equal respect and esteem, &c.

Vienna, August 8, 1768.

L E T T E R III.

TO THE SAME.

THREE weeks have already elapsed, since I was informed by the officers of this custom-house, that a parcel of books addressed to me, was arrived. I had no doubt, but that this was the long wished for poetical present of books which you had generously destined
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for my use ; but my long impatience to possess them, has still been obliged to suffer the further delay of a rigorous examination, to which all printed books brought hither are subject ; and to this delay was added that of the book-binder, into whose hands I was obliged to put the loose and deranged sheets, in order to enable me to read them with any degree of comfort. I am at length, however, in possession of the three volumes ; and here I must frankly confess, that the magnetic power of the verses, violently attracted all my attention to the previous perusal of your poetical version. But perceiving in your learned preface, (which from long habit, I never neglect) that it was your wish the reader should first be furnished with your necessary *viaticum*, before he entered on poetic ground, I prepared to obey you ; and found myself well satisfied, and generously rewarded for my obedience ; as your very learned preliminary dissertation, not only qualified me, (as much as I am capable of being qualified) to judge of the merit of your translation, but has made me travel with wonder and delight, through the vast, various, and choice erudition, with which you are no less usefully, than abundantly furnished ; and has excited
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in me such eagerness to profit at so easy a rate, from all the information which your literary labours present to the reader, that I could not defer enriching myself, by a perusal of your golden treatise on the calendar, weights, measures, and money of the Hebrews. Thus prepared and disposed, you may easily imagine, Sir, that in the perusal of the eighty Psalms which you have translated, I have not neglected one of the marginal notes, or observations with which they are accompanied; and that I have been compelled to receive all the instruction, as well as pleasure, which you have prepared for us.

The dignity, clearness, harmony, and elegance of the style, so properly varied, according to the grandeur, humility, anger, contrition, or tenderness, expressed in the sacred writings, would be a sufficient merit in your work; but, the being able to correct so effectually and naturally, what so many of the most learned investigators after long trying in vain to accomplish, have pronounced heterogeneous to the Oriental language of poetry, has, in my opinion, all the merit of a new discovery of some unknown continent; and besides this, I admire in you,
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without understanding it, the combination, in one individual, of all that fire and energy of genius, which enables you to mount Parnassus, with the cool perseverance necessary to critical enquiries.

And yet, begging your pardon, I have found something that is reprehensible in your book, the attentive perusal of which has accustomed me to criticism. I cannot forgive the injustice with which you have treated in your preface, that *poor little town*, as you call your native place; in which you complain of being buried in solitude: as you owe to the tranquil leisure which it affords you, an exemption from the inevitable distractions of a crowded city, and are in some measure indebted to this circumstance for the honourable place which you already hold in the Republic of letters, at so early a period of your life. If you would wipe away this ungrateful stain, you ought in conscience to make a public acknowledgment of your error.

But retorting the accusation, you will, perhaps, say that it is I that am ungrateful, for appearing almost insensible to the kind partiality with which you so liberally honour me in your works, and postponing my
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thanks for it to the end of my letter. But you must not do me so much injustice. I have a due sense of all your kindness, and of the advantage of your good opinion: and if I speak of them late and briefly, it is because I am fearful if I should dwell too much on the subject of your praise, of provoking you to examine the little merit I may have, by an exact experiment, in your critical crucible. Ah! my dear Sig. Saverio! explore it no further, if you wish to continue to love me; but rather judge of it from that grateful, affectionate, and respectful esteem, with which I am, and ever wish to be, invariably yours.

Vienna, April 3, 1769.

P. S. I intended speaking fully of the masterly translations of Pindar and Homer; of the truly lyrical dedication; and of some particular psalms with which I have been, in a more especial manner, affected; but my natural powers correspond but ill with my wishes. Pray believe, however, that I feel all that one author can wish another to feel in his favour.

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L E T T E R IV.

TO THE SAME.

Tu quoque brute fili mi! And is my friend Sig. D. Saverio among the conspirators? Or rather among the two partial projectors who have conceived a design that will overwhelm me with confusion? How could you imagine it possible for me to have the courage to sustain the idea of seeing myself placed at the side of the father of the muses? (*d*) And the Princess of Belmonte, who ought to be perfectly acquainted with the character of the dean of her servants, has *Sbe*, instead of opposing it, given her countenance and support to so strange a design, and conspired to vex and mortify me? The extreme diffidence of myself, even to a vice, which has tormented me through the whole course of my life, and been the greatest obstacle to my prosperity, was so well known

(*d*) It seems that there was at this time, a design formed at Naples, of printing Pope's life of Homer, and dedicating it to Metastasio, and of placing an engraving of his head, opposite to that of Homer.

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to her, that she might have easily figured to herself, what melancholy thoughts of my own unworthiness, such excessive partiality would awaken; and how sensible I must be, of the disproportion of an honour, which has been so involuntarily usurped by me. You must not imagine, however, that my just shame will in the least diminish the gratitude which I owe to my friends, for their kind and most flattering intentions. For though it has been carried to excess, I should regard it as the happiest circumstance of my life, if I could separate the idea of the effect from the cause.

It would be too long and laborious a task for me, to point out all the passages of your learned translation which have particularly struck me. The matter would encrease excessively under the pen. But I am now no more able to write long letters; and the remorse for neglected excellence would be more disagreeable to me, than the fatigue of praising it. I must, however, briefly tell you, that the forty-fourth and sixty-seventh Psalms, have impressed my mind with an uncommon degree of pleasure and admiration: the first by an ingenious, elegant, and poetical elocution, no less wonderfully analogous

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gous to the allegorical, than literal, sense ; and the second, by an unexpected clearness and consistence, notwithstanding the apparent desperate want of connexion in the original. Then in your thoughts on the ancient music, and on the theatre, you have flattered my self-love sufficiently to make me pleased with my own ideas ; as the greater part of them perfectly coincide with those which my meditations on the same subjects have formerly produced.

The frank and friendly account which you have confided to me, of your past and present enterprises, has obliged me extremely ; and I cannot sufficiently praise your wise resolution of devoting your distinguished talents to the more Fruitful, and for you, more Glorious, application of poetry. I foresee with pleasure, the interesting and illustrious progress you will make ; and already, in some degree, partake of it, both as your fellow labourer, and almost your countryman. You must not be scandalized at this last pretension : there is a foundation for it. You already know, that the beneficent Gian Vincenzo Gravina, no less a Father than Master to me, with a labour which ought to have produced fruit more worthy of him, strove

to enrich my mind with Greek and Latin literature, and Roman jurisprudence. Nor can you be a stranger to the merit of his celebrated relation, Gregorio Caroprese, into whose hands he placed me, while a child, to go through a whole course of philosophy under his discipline, and with whom I resided, in Calabria, all the time that was thought necessary for the completion of that design. I have therefore some reason to pride myself for having run from the banks of my native Tibur, as far as Magna Græcia, and tasting the first aliments of scientific cognition, near the renowned source of the Italic sect.

My translation in verse of Horace's Art of Poetry, has been long finished. It however, requires innumerable notes and observations, for which I have collected many materials; but time has always been wanting, as well as patience, for a task to me extremely ungrateful; so that these materials still remain in the utmost confusion; nor do I know when I shall have courage sufficient to set about digesting them. The best of it is, that the republic of letters will not suffer any great injury from my negligence. The few reflections which I wrote upon all the Greek tragedies and comedies that remain,
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merely to assist my own memory, had wholly fulfilled their destination in the private use I made of them. I had not furnished them with the necessary equipage, for appearing with decency in the learned world; and they must therefore remain contented, in the little corner which I have assigned them in my bureau.

Alas! I am now out of breath, my much respected Sig. Saverio. The pleasure of talking with You, has made me forget my infirmities; but now I am forced to finish my letter, whether I will or no. Do not withdraw from me your regard. Represent the excess of my mortification and gratitude to the Princess di Belmonte—Honour me with your commands, and believe me, &c.

Vienna, May 29, 1769.

L E T T E R V.

TO THE SAME.

IN spite of the persecution of my hypochondriac affections, which at present thwart me beyond their usual indiscretion, I cannot suffer your last most obliging letter to remain

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longer unanswered; in which I find new motives for being flattered with that enviable good fortune, much more than my own merit, which has produced your affectionate and most partial regard towards me.

I have read over and over again, and always with new pleasure, both the Epithalamic Psalm, and the Cantata of *Eunoïo*. In the first, besides the merits it has in common with its companions, I have admired the author's dexterity in applying it so opportunely on the present occasion; and in the dedication of it, I am pleased with myself to find, that before I had such a convincing proof of it, I was always firmly of opinion that you were no less familiar with the Latin than the Italian muse. And in the most gay and pleasing *Eunoïo*, I saw throughout, in all its force, your reigning and characteristic excellence, in uniting poetical elegance with the deepest learning and erudition. I congratulate you on these gifts, and myself on being enriched with the possession of so valuable a friend.

I shall try my influence with SASSONE (*Hasse*) to get him to set one of your psalms; though he is so frequently disabled by the gout, that I know not whether he will have
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it in his power to comply with my request. He does not live in the city; so that many months elapse, sometimes, without our seeing each other. As soon as ever I can spare the time, I shall seek him, and if possible, set him to work. I should lengthen this letter considerably, if writing was less painful and inconvenient to the mechanism of my frail frame. Believe me always, with the most constant and respectful esteem, &c.

Vienna, August 14, 1769.

Hafse, it seems, was found in a fit of the gout, and unable to oblige *Metastasio*, at this time, in complying with his request, however he may have wished it, from a long acquaintance and admiration of his character and abilities; the poet, therefore, set his pupil, the accomplished Signora *Martinetz*, to work, and the following letter gives an account of her success.

L E T T E R VI.

TO SIG. SAVERIO MATTEI.

THE music of the psalm which you wished to have set, has been finished some weeks ; but I have hitherto had no opportunity of transmitting it to you. However, I hope to find one soon ; and in the mean time, to prevent the delay from giving birth to any suspicions injurious to my diligence, I give you this previous information. The pleasure with which the young female composer has set about this enterprize, and executed it, inclines me to flatter myself that she has not been unsuccessful. She proposed to avail herself at once of the grace of the modern style, avoiding its Licentiousness, and the solid ecclesiastical harmony of the ancient, stripped of its Gothicism. I am not musician sufficient to judge whether she has succeeded, or no ; but I hope, at least, that the frame will not disgrace the picture. You will be the best judge of this yourself, who have been long initiated in harmonical mysteries ; and this being the case, it is unnecessary to suggest to you, that this production,

duction, before it is exposed to the judgment of profane ears, should be rehearsed under the direction of some able, discreet, and charitable director; that the faults of others, in the execution, may not be ascribed to the poor composer herself. Whenever it is on the road, you shall have immediate information, and every necessary circumstance explained.

Adieu, my dear Sig. Don Saverio. Do not cease to love me, and to believe me to be, with equal respect and esteem, &c.

Vienna, December 4, 1769.

L E T T E R VII.

TO THE SAME.

I OUGHT to make a long reply to your most obliging letter of the 27th of November, in which, in the partiality of affectionate friendship, and animated by your natural eloquence, you have almost persuaded me, that the weight of years is a desirable assistant in mounting Parnassus. But to avoid Asiatic prolixity, I shall tell you, with the most sincere brevity, that the intense meditation necessary for the invention and texture

texture of a dramatic composition, after having treated almost all the modifications of the human heart, is inevitably become an exceeding hard labour to me; for having already written so much, I am every day in more danger of repeating Myself; and the being eternally on the watch would chill invention, and clip my wings, in every attempt at elevation. Add to this, that in my most confident and vigorous days, I was wanting, even to excess, in the requisite courage and opinion of myself, which is necessary in great enterprises; and now, I am more than ever convinced, that this species of useful temerity, is not to be acquired in old-age. At present, indeed, if my good fortune has not freed me from fatigue, it has at least, exempted me from the disagreeable necessity of publishing my weakness: for when I had nearly accomplished the labour, enjoined me, I discovered that it was not the intention of the court, to give any theatrical exhibition, at the approaching nuptials; so that I have abandoned the work with the highest pleasure, remitting to the Greek calends, the task of finishing it. But I have already spoken too much about myself.

I have read with infinite pleasure, the octave Stanza, enriched with the Latin paraphrase,

paraphrase, entitled, *La Veglia de' Numi*, and have discovered what your genius is capable of, even in This kind of poetry. I know not what more to require of you. Facility, dignity, elegance, imagination, harmony, and above all, judgment. The noble and pleasing simile of the child and the faun, discovers the richness of the mine, which produced it. I congratulate you upon it, and am much obliged to you for the communication.

To-day, a parcel containing your most beautiful Psalms, set to music by Mademoiselle Marianne Martinetz, has been sent to the post, for Naples. I hope the musical compositions will not disgrace your excellent poetry; and am impatient for your sincere opinion, as well as that of other good judges. Continue to honour me with your affectionate friendship, and believe me, invariably yours.

Vienna, December 18, 1769.

The following long, and curious letter, not only gives an account of the favourable reception at Naples, of the music which Signora Martinetz had set to one of the Psalms of Sig. Saverio Mattei's translation; but contains

tains the opinions of Metastasio, on the subject of ancient Greek music. A theme upon which the poet unwillingly entered; but, having been pressed by his correspondent to discuss this dark and difficult point, in hopes, probably, that his own decided sentiments would be fortified by coincidence, Metastasio humbly disclaims all science, and neither speaks as a profound critic, nor musician; but answers an unreasonable question, like an intelligent man, under the guidance of modesty, and good taste. It was not likely that Metastasio, who had never heard the ancient music, nor scientifically studied the modern, should arrogantly attempt to inform one who professed himself to be well acquainted with the ancient musical writers, and a judge of modern composition. The poet gets rid of the question dextrously: leaving it to be answered by men of more courage, and less diffidence in their own powers,

LETTER VIII.

TO SIGNOR SAVERIO MATTEI.

A FEW affairs, most respected Sig. Saverio, are sufficient to occupy all the activity of a
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tired and exhausted individual, loaded with years, like myself. I have had more business on my hands for some time past, than strength to accomplish it ; so that I must not only beg of you to pardon, but pity, my involuntary delay, in answering your last obliging and learned letter. I never dissembled, from the beginning of our intercourse, my physical impediments to becoming a constant and laborious correspondent ; so that you are obliged to take me as you found me, and in spite of all defects, to regard me as your own.

Prudens emisisti vitiosum: dicta tibi est lex.

Our indefatigable young composer, is extremely surprised at the extraordinary approbation with which you have honoured her music. The limits prescribed to her ambition, did not allow her to aspire at such an elevation ; and she has no doubt, but that she is indebted to your courtesy, for the chief part of those strong expressions which have been bestowed upon her production. However, to hear the effect of her attempt, she had had a very private rehearsal in her own apartment, of the Psalm which she had set. There was only a single instrument for each part ; and four voices, rather below mediocrity, without any other assistance in the

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choruses: so that all the enchantment of that species of painting, which arises from *chiaro-scuro*, was wanting. But notwithstanding this, I am obliged to confess, that the varied, delightful, and uncommon harmony of the composition, greatly surpassed my expectation; as well as that of the few initiated, who were admitted to the mysteries. She had the precaution to provide a copy of the poetry for each person present, and exulted in the general applause bestowed on the excellent Translator. I hope that this necessary step was not neglected at Naples. I take an interested part in the just honour which has been done to your learned book, by the rapid sale, which has so soon rendered a new edition, in octavo, necessary; but I should be sorry if the first, in quarto, remained incomplete. The three volumes with which you so obligingly favoured me, merely put into boards, for the convenience of instant perusal, wait with impatience for their companion or companions, in order to be uniformly dressed with that elegance and splendour, which is due to their high rank and worth. They have hitherto occupied my leisure so pleasantly and usefully, that

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I should grieve to defraud them of this little mark of my gratitude.

And do you wish *me* to tell You my sentiments of the merit of Ancient Music! Ah! cruel Signor Saverio! This is inhumanly driving me into a labyrinth, whence you very well know, that it is impossible for me to extricate myself, even if I were furnished with all the necessary instruments, for such an operation, and was in the vigour of youth to use them. What reasonable parallel can I possibly draw of unknown objects? I am convinced of the royal pomp and magnificence of the Hebrew music: I am not allowed to doubt of the efficacy of the Greek; but notwithstanding that, I am utterly unable to form to myself, a just idea of their different systems. I likewise know very well, that music is the same throughout all nature, that is, consisting of *a delightful harmony, produced from proportions of grave and acute tones, and in times of different duration.* But who will furnish me with the clue of Ariadne, to prevent my being bewildered in these proportions? They principally depend on the accurate division of the scale, or series of tones; which scale, however, has been, I believe, and still remains,

mains, manifestly imperfect. How should I doubt of this, when I hear the greatest masters dispute whether the interval from one sound to another, ought to consist of 5, 7, or 9 commas? When I find that one calls the 4th a discord, and another a perfect concord? While I perceive that a harpsichord, if tuned exactly according to the divisions of our system, is sensibly false? And if, in order to remedy this inconvenience, Tuners ought to leave an excessive 5th, called the *Wolf*, (that is, out of tune,) and flattens as much as possible the other 5ths, to render the 3ds more agreeable? Who will tell me, that the ancients were more happy than we are in the exactness of this division, no less subject to error, than that of the calendar! Or who will inform me, by what expedient they obviated this imperfection, in order to disguise, as we do, the inconvenience?

After having read in Plutarch, the tiresome enumeration of the inventors of musical improvements; after hearing from him, and the Greek writers collected and commented by the learned Meibomius, the terms *hypate*, *nete*, *diapason*, *diateffaron*, *diapente*, *tetrachords*, *diatonic*, *chromatic*, and *enarmonic genera*, and all the vocabulary of ancient

cient music, shall I be a bit the wiser? shall I then know how to form a clear definition of all those words which fright children? And in such total darkness, how is it possible to form comparisons? Perhaps what is dark as Erebus to me, may be broad day-light to others more perspicacious, and less strangers in this vast and gloomy province. But you must not imagine, that even this will enable them to form a just comparison between the ancient and modern music. Music is the object of a particular sense; and the senses, either from their natural variations, or those which different habits occasion, change their taste, not only every century, but every season. A banquet dressed at present by the receipt of *Apicius*, would disgust the strongest stomachs. The so much boasted *Bacchi cura Falernus agar*, in the opinion of modern palates, would now produce a wine only fit for galley-slaves. Bitter, nauseous Coffee, worse than poison itself, according to Redi, is become a most delightful beverage, to all the inhabitants of the globe; and who knows, whether, at last, he did not grow fond of it himself. The Airs which so enchanted our forefathers, are now become coarse, disgusting, and insupportable lullabies,

bies, to modern ears. What then shall we call the perfection of music, subjected as it is to the decisions of taste, which is itself every moment changing? and whence shall I take a certain model from which to determine, whether I judge from sound principles, or the delirium of taste! But, you say, “ this scepticism does not answer my question. I can doubt as well as you, and have no great curiosity to know how you doubt. My wish is, to be informed what your ideas are of ancient and modern music; as it seems absolutely impossible, but that in spite of all your doubt, you must have formed some.” It is most certain, my dear friend, that the slightest foundations are sufficient for our active and daring imagination to build upon at our pleasure. The instant I hear the names of Cairo, or Peking, pronounced, they present me with ideas of those vast cities, which I have never seen. Now if it will satisfy you, Sir, to know the ideas which I have formed on similar foundations, I am ready to gratify your curiosity.

It seems to me, my much respected friend, that the music of the ancients, was not only much more simple than ours, but more efficacious; and that of the moderns, on the contrary,

contrary, is more artificial, and more wonderful. When I hear that Plato, in his republic, would have Music be the first universal study of every individual, as a necessary foundation for every other study, and every virtue: when I read, that not only all the poets but all the philosophers of Greece, the superintendents of the exercise of youth, and magistrates of republics themselves, were excellent musicians; I conclude, that music must then have required less study than now; when in order to become a tolerable artist, it is necessary to bestow half a life upon it. Hence the ancient must, consequently, have been more simple. To prove that ours is more artful than that, it is sufficient to mention, exclusive of every thing else, modern Counterpoint; by means of which, twenty-four or even more melodies, all different from each other, may be heard at the same time, and produce sweet harmony, unknown to the ancients. That this contrivance was unknown to the ancients, is demonstrated by the learned Padre Martini, who assigns historical and scientific reasons, why they neither had nor could have it; proving, that the union of different voices, mentioned in a few passages of ancient authors, upon which a contrary opinion has been weakly supported, is all reducible to

the finging at the same time, some in 4ths, some in 5ths, and some in octaves, but in exactly the same melody.

And indeed, if such a wonderful invention had been known to the Greeks, who can believe that they would not have described it with more pomp and parade? Let us add likewise, that all the different ways which the ancients had of writing music, that are come down to us, render their practice of our complicated counterpoint impossible. That power of expressing, as we do at present, in one single staff composed of five lines, all the alterations of sounds possible, and their several lengths and duration, it was which enabled us, by placing one melody over another, to discover at a single glance, all their relations and isochronous employments, which, in my opinion, gave birth to counterpoint. Now this manner of writing music, you know, is not of higher antiquity, than the eleventh century.

X Then the ancient music, having had more effect than the modern, is to me a proof that it must have been occasioned by the absolutely different institution of ancient and modern singers. The theatre is the throne of

of music. There she can display all the pomp of her enchantments, and there the reigning taste of the people is propagated. The theatres of the ancients were vast squares, ours are vessels of small dimensions. Hence, in order to be heard in them by the innumerable spectators assembled together, it was necessary to be possessed of that *vox Tragædorum*, which Tully required in an orator; and, consequently, it was necessary for persons destined to use their voices in such ample theatres, to begin in very early youth, to render it strong, firm, clear, and vigorous, by an exercise very different from that in present practice. On the contrary, our singers, who can be heard with much less force, have abandoned the ancient laborious school: and instead of fatiguing themselves in rendering their voices firm, robust, and sonorous, study to make them more delicate and flexible. By this new method, they have attained the wonderful power of velocity, which astonishes the hearers, and procures them unbounded applause.

But a voice diminished, in eternal motion, and, consequently, weakened by arpeggios, trills, and divisions, may well afford that pleasure which arises from wonder, and

ought to be preceded by a syllogism; but never that proceeding immediately from the natural and vigorous impressions of a clear, firm, and robust voice, which affects our organs of hearing with equal force and delight, and has the power even to penetrate the soul. I have had, and many others may have, an opportunity, by a small specimen, to judge how enormous a difference there is between these two manners of singing. The singers of the pontifical chapel, though from their childhood educated in the modern school, when they are admitted in that choir, are obliged rigorously to abandon all the applauded embellishments of common singing, and to accustom themselves, as much as possible, at so late a period, to swell and sustain the voice. Now the celebrated *Miserere* itself, which has ravished me in extatic pleasure, and internally moved me, as sung at Rome, beyond any other music I ever heard, has only fatigued and wearied me, when executed at Vienna, according to the most excellent style of the present times.

I have imagined, sometimes, that our ecclesiastical chant might give us some idea of the ancient; considering, that about the end of the sixth or beginning of the seventh century,

century, when St. Gregory regulated the music of the Liturgy, the public theatres were open; and it appears to me natural, that whatever music was composed at that time, would be tinged with the reigning style. But besides the barbarism into which the theatres, as well as other things, were then sunk, what performers could be found now, that are able to execute it, if it is impossible for our fingers to sustain a *maxima* (*e*), though they can run thirty-two semiquavers in a bar?

Good God! what a long and tiresome scrawl have you induced me to write! I may well say with Anacreon's dove:

Λαλιέραν μ' ἔθηκες,
Αἰθρώπι, καὶ κορώνης.

Thy treatment is so kind and gracious,
It makes me as the Pie loquacious.

In reward for my blind obedience, I intreat you not to suffer this letter to get into other hands than your own. I shall be inconsolable, if any one should think of making it public, under the notion of doing me honour. You know my defects: pity them: continue to love me in spite of them; and constantly believe me, &c.

Vienna, April 25, 1770.

(*e*) A *Maxima* or *Large*, in old music, equalled in length, eight semibreves,

D d 4

LET-

L E T T E R IX,

TO THE SAME.

I RECEIVED last week your parcel from Naples. I know not by what conveyance, nor could any one inform me ; but I perceive that it brings me the sheets which should have accompanied your preceding letter.

I have read your ingenious Cantata, for the nuptials of the Marchioness of *Tanucci*, or rather Drama ; for this pleasing composition, besides the vivacity of style, is full of action and incidents, which entertain and seduce the reader, and at the same time contribute to the panegyric of the hero. Every day produces new proofs of the amazing extension of your talents ; and I am proud of the just idea which I had conceived of them, from the very beginning of our acquaintance.

I am extremely delighted by the attentive perusal of the musico-philosophical letters, which you have been pleased to communicate to me (*f*). I have both admired and envied the force and dexterity of two valiant athletes, who not only shew mastership in

(*f*) Alluding to a controversy on the subject of ancient Music, between Sig. Mattei and the Bishop of * * *, inserted in the *Salmi*, Tom. II.

their

their art by assailing, but skirmishing with each other. They have long kept me fluctuating between their different decisions. Each of them assailing me alone, would have vanquished me; but the one having defended me from the violence of the other, without changing my place, I find myself in the midst of my former doubts. All that I can be certain of, is, my firm resolution never to expose myself to the attacks of such expert and vigorous champions, lest I should furnish you with too cogent reasons for diminishing that excessive partiality with which I perceive you think, speak, and write, of me: a partiality, which being wholly gratuitous, is not sufficiently repaid by the ample, but due justice, which I publicly render you.

My fantastical conjectures, concerning ancient music, communicated to You only, in mere obedience, are not worthy of a defence. I am myself so little certain of them, that I would not on any account, take up arms in their support. However, it seems to me, as if you thought me inconsistent, and in contradiction with my own principles; and I wish, at least, to demonstrate to you, that if I have happened to fail in reason and clearness,

clearness, I have not violated the dialectic canons. After having asserted the enormous *instability* of taste, it is true, I have supposed a constant and general *simplicity* in the ancient music, compared with ours: and have not sufficiently distinguished the different periods which may be comprehended in the name of ancient. In the first place, I confess, that it never entered into my mind, that the *variety of tastes*, at all contradicted the *constancy of simplicity*; as the one may vary to infinity, without changing the other. For example: the expressions of *simple and soft, simple and rough, simple and tender, simple and severe, &c.* involve, in my opinion, no contradiction; as all the thousand infinitely different modifications, which may be objects of taste, are capable of one and the same constant simplicity, and may be found included in it, as the species in the genus. If, therefore, I have not distinguished the several periods of antiquity, it is because I thought simplicity common to them all; and the catalogue of tastes being allowed, it did not seem necessary to ascribe to the one, the changes of the other. Let me try to render my reasoning more clear. I establish as a fundamental, that I regard the
theatre,

theatre, to be the indisputable *arbitrator of the fate of music*. In the theatre the people hear, and being naturally imitators, retain, and repeat, what has pleased them the most, in public, whether there, at festivals, or even in the temple, whither in process of time, the theatrical taste is carried. It is certainly so in our times, nor have the ancients been without observing it. Ovid, in the third Book of his *Fasts*, describing the different diversions of the Roman people, in the fields beyond the Tibur, during the *anna Perenna festivals*, says:

*Illic et cantant quidquid dedicere theatri,
Et jaſtant faciles ad ſua verba manus.*

And thither from the ſtage they bring
The fav'rite ſtrains they dance and ſing,
While from the geſtures of their arms
The words obtain new force and charms.

Now the theatre, through all dramatic antiquity, which has come to my knowledge, beginning from the firſt ſtage of *Æſchylus*, or if you will, the Cart of Theſpis, cotemporary with Solon among the Greeks, and from *Livius Andronicus* among the Romans, the theatre I ſay, has been always a place in the open air, ſufficiently ſpacious to contain
a great

a great number of spectators, till the modern invention of our inclosed, covered, and extremely contracted halls, which we now honour with the name of theatres. These, in my opinion, have given birth to, favoured, and rendered possible, our most complicated system of music, so different from the ancient. Now as the art of sound, depends on the regulation of air put into motion, it is necessary, when a great body is to be moved, that it should be done by means infinitely different from those employed for one that is circumscribed. Whoever sings in the open air to a whole people, is obliged to use his utmost force to make himself heard; a force unnecessary for our wonderful divisions and vocal tricks, which can only be executed with a subdued voice, and in an inclosed place. Now when a melody is composed of few parts, its combinations are few; so that it must necessarily be more simple. What I imagined to be a proof of this universal simplicity in the time of Plato, is not confuted, to my thinking, by advertising to the pleasures received from this art in modern times. You must not, my dear Sir, imagine these to be many, because many talk of them. A small smattering in
the

the theory of an art, furnishes the means of much discourse on the subject; but the becoming a real artist, is the work of incessant practice, that masters every thing, without excepting even virtue itself, which sages have defined *habitus animi ratione consentaneus*. That the practice of modern music is infinite, needs no proof. To exercise the chest, the lips, the eyes, ears, and fingers, till they instantly unite in the performance of offices so distinct, at the moment of need, requires millions of repetitions, and an abundant share of heroic patience. This painful and eternal exercise generally occupies so large a portion of our short lives, that it leaves us little for other purposes, military or civil. And if a few individuals have been able to vanquish these enormous difficulties, they should be reckoned among portents and phenomena, which are worthy of admiration, though not foundations for rules. x

You see, my dear Sir, how loquacious the puerile fear of passing for a bad logician in your opinion has rendered me. But to say the truth, this was hardly a sufficient reason for giving myself so much trouble. If we meet with solecisms among legislators, it
should

should not be regarded as a crime of great shame or moral turpitude, if a poet chance to be found guilty of contradictions.

Our diligent young composer, eagerly enjoins me to present you her best respects. She has relinquished all her other studies, in order to attempt another psalm, and has nearly arrived at the middle of the enterprize. If she proceeds with the same felicity to the end of her task, as she seems hitherto to have done, I hope she will not be stript of the reputation with which she has already been honoured. The second perusal of your forty-first psalm, first assigned to her, fixed her affection in such a manner, that she cannot avail herself of the liberty which you have allowed her, of choosing another. With respect to the voices, she has determined to employ the same number as she did in the *Miserere*, for the convenience of exercising her abilities as a contrapuntist, and for diversifying the composition. She will write two airs with an accompaniment for the harp, *obligata*, but in such a manner, that they may be executed with a violin, when no harp is at hand. Adieu, my dear friend.

Vienna, July 9, 1770.

L E T.

L E T T E R X.

TO THE SAME.

FROM a very commendable desire of not multiplying useless letters, I have, perhaps, a little indulged my organic indolence, in deferring my answer to your two last obliging letters, till the present occasion of announcing to you the departure of Signora *Martinetz's* new psalm; which you would have received at least three weeks sooner, if a delay had not been occasioned by the scarcity and badness of the copyists in this city. The psalm, therefore, already consigned to the bearer, will go the same road as its elder brother. The attentive composer has studied as much as possible to second the genius of this sacred production, by a different expression from that of the *Miserere*. The subject of which being the deep affliction of an humble and contrite heart, who knows, acknowledges, and detests his crime, and implores mercy and forgiveness. The subject of the second, is a strong desire, floating between hope and fear; so that constant affliction is
the

the characteristic of the one, and of the other, the perpetual conflict of melancholy and cheerful ideas; which in minds occupied by hope and fear, rapidly succeed each other. The one furnishes to the composer more passion, and the other opens a field of greater variety to the operations of fancy. You must judge, Sir, whether she has made a good use of the liberty which this psalm presents to her imagination.

But however she may have succeeded in this, she will certainly never attempt a competition with the composer who intends to ornament my fortunate *Giuseppe riconosciuto* with his notes. To give me an idea of the excellence of this music, besides what you say of it, who have had the advantage to hear it, the respected name of the Marquis *di San Giorgio*, who has composed it, is sufficient. I have long known, that he possesses this enchanting faculty equally with his other numerous accomplishments; so that he is distinct from persons of his class, and has left far behind him all the professional industry of the most celebrated masters, who confess themselves fortunate that his high rank has delivered them from the danger of contending with so powerful a rival. I feel
all

all the efficacy of your seducing notes, in the desire which you express to enrich with your learned observations, my sacred compositions: a temptation, to confess the truth, too violent for my vanity to bear. But heaven forbid that I should take such an advantage of the kindness of so worthy and dear a friend! I ought to wish, and do truly wish, that the constant fertility of the soil, the cultivation of which you have prudently undertaken, should not be a moment neglected for other concerns. But I am, nevertheless, infinitely obliged to you for such a kind intention, which discovers to me the generosity of your heart, and the enviable place in it which I have the good fortune to occupy.

Your elegant encomiums on the wise and learned minister, the Marquis Tanucci, and those which he universally receives from others, are justly due. Those in your poem are easy, decorous, ingenious, and full of all that pleasant urbanity, which inspires hilarity, without the assistance of a single trait of indelicacy. It is incredible to me, that you should be a novice in this kind of writing. Your attempts may serve for models. I am so convinced that nothing

is impossible to you, that if you should take it into your head to fly, I should not despair to see you make me an unexpected visit at my chamber window. The extension of the talents with which nature has enriched you, appears to me every day more wonderful; and as I love as much as I admire you, I wish that fortune, in favouring you, would be as bountiful as nature.

Adieu, most amiable Sig. Saverio; continue to me your most precious friendship, and remember, that knowing you as I do, I neither can nor will be otherwise than yours most sincerely.

Vicenna, Sep. 17, 1770.

L E T T E R XI.

TO THE SAME.

I HAVE received, repeatedly read, and admired with new pleasure, your new cantata written for the court, which you have been so obliging as to send me: and believe it impossible, in an involuntary poetical operation, that any one should, in future, be equally happy in the use of symbols so obscure and unconnected, as those inexplicable ancient pictures

tures of Herculaneum, which you have had the art to make the basis of your ingenious composition. I speak not of the noble and clear style, the selection of thoughts, the beauty and harmony of the numbers, the Homeric imitation of Alcides extricating himself from Cimmeria, or of the gay and festive images in which it abounds. I shall only say, that I am wholly unable to comprehend how, amidst the assiduity of paternal cares, the laborious agitations of the bar, and the indefatigable toil of critical researches, you can still have the force to mount to the summit of Parnassus at your pleasure. I congratulate myself upon it, as well as our *Magna Græcia*, the enviable productress of men of such vigorous and universal genius.

The young composer rejoices at her music being safely arrived, and in your possession. It is not thought worthy of any such enlightened praise as you mention. All her ambition amounted to no more than a wish, that her humble notes might afford the excellent author, a part of that pleasure which she has received in setting so tender, devout, and sublime a composition : she is therefore impatient for the event.

E e 2

With

With my conjectures concerning the music of the ancients, do what you please. They were made in pure obedience to your commands, and after having obtained my wished *restitution in integrum* of my poor dialect, I have nothing more to do with them.

Vienna, December, 20, 1770.

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